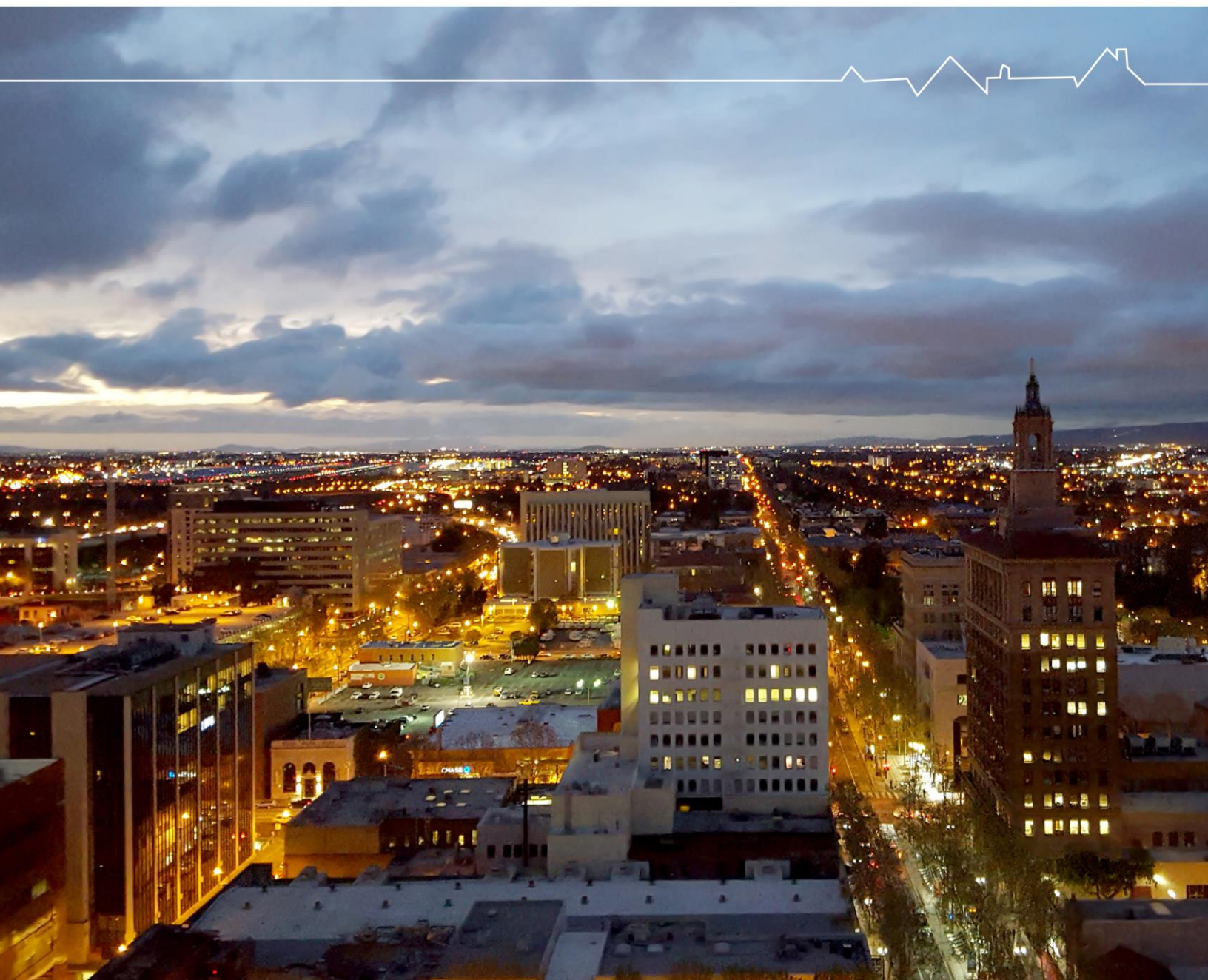




# CITY OF SAN JOSÉ

## 2017 HOMELESS CENSUS & SURVEY

### COMPREHENSIVE REPORT



REPORT PRODUCED BY ASR



## ABOUT THE RESEARCHER

Applied Survey Research (ASR) is a social research firm dedicated to helping people build better communities by collecting meaningful data, facilitating information-based planning, and developing custom strategies. The firm was founded on the principle that community improvement, initiative sustainability, and program success are closely tied to assessment needs, evaluation of community goals, and development of appropriate responses.

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The City of San José, County of Santa Clara and ASR would also like to acknowledge and thank the 215 volunteers, service providers and County and City employees who registered as volunteers for the census efforts and the many community and faith-based organizations that helped to recruit volunteers. Finally, this study would not be possible without the 132 homeless census and survey workers, 331 survey respondents, and dozens of outreach workers whose efforts are reflected throughout this report.

## PROJECT PLANNING COMMITTEE

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## POINT-IN-TIME JURISDICTIONAL FUNDER

City of San José

## SERVICE PROVIDERS

Abode · Bill Wilson Center · Bill Wilson Drop-In Center and Opportunity Health Center · Bitfocus · City of San José · City of Sunnyvale · City Team Ministries · County Office of Supportive Housing · Destination: Home · Diocese of San José · Gardner Family Health Network · Gilroy Compassion Center · Housing Authority of the County of Santa Clara · Housing Choices Coalition · HomeFirst · People Assisting the Homeless · Salvation Army Emmanuel House · Santa Clara University · Santa Clara County Office of Education · Silver Creek High School · Southside Community Center · St Joseph's · West Valley Community Services



# Introduction

Every two years, during the last ten days of January, communities across the country conduct comprehensive counts of the local population experiencing homelessness. These counts measure the prevalence of homelessness in each community, and collect information on individuals and families residing in emergency shelters and transitional housing, as well as people sleeping on the streets, in cars, in abandoned properties, or in other places not meant for human habitation.

The biennial Point-in-Time Census is the only source of nationwide data on sheltered and unsheltered homelessness, and is required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) of all jurisdictions receiving federal funding to provide housing and services for individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

Continuums of Care report the findings of their local Point-in-Time Census in their annual funding application to HUD, which ultimately help the federal government better understand the nature and extent of homelessness nationwide. A continuum of care is a community organization that is put in place to monitor and deliver services related to homelessness and, in this case, is made of the entirety of the County of Santa Clara. Census data also help to inform communities' local strategic planning, capacity building, and advocacy campaigns to prevent and end homelessness.

The City of San José is enumerated under the broader Point-in-Time Census that takes place in the County of Santa Clara. The enumeration efforts used in the City of San José report take place using the same methodology as the county census and use the same infrastructure support those efforts.

The City of San José has worked in conjunction with Applied Survey Research (ASR) to conduct the 2017 Homeless Census and Survey. ASR is a social research firm with extensive experience in homeless enumeration and needs assessment and has worked with the City of San José.

The Homeless Census and Survey has two primary components: a point-in-time enumeration of unsheltered homeless individuals and families (those sleeping outdoors, on the street, in parks, or vehicles, etc.) and a point-in-time enumeration of homeless individuals and families residing in temporary shelter (e.g. emergency shelter or transitional housing).

The 2017 Census and Survey was a comprehensive community effort. With the support of 132 individuals with lived experience of homelessness, 215 community volunteers, staff from various City and County departments, and law enforcement, the entire county was canvassed between the hours of 5:30 a.m. and noon on January 24th and 25th, 2017. This resulted in a peer-informed visual count of unsheltered homeless individuals and families residing on the streets, in vehicles, makeshift shelters, encampments and other places not meant for human



habitation. Shelters and facilities reported the number of homeless individuals and families who occupied their facilities on the same evening.

In addition to the adult count, a specialized count of unaccompanied children and transitional-age-youth under the age of 25 years old was conducted later in the day. This dedicated count is part of a nationwide effort, established and recommended by HUD, to improve our understanding of the scope of youth homelessness. Trained youth enumerators who currently or recently experienced homelessness conducted the count in targeted areas where young people experiencing homelessness were known to congregate.<sup>1</sup> This is an important year for national data on young people experiencing homelessness, as HUD will use 2017 youth count results as a baseline for measuring progress toward ending youth homelessness by 2020.

In the weeks following the street count, an in-depth survey was administered to 331 unsheltered and sheltered homeless individuals of all ages in the City of San José. The survey gathered basic demographic details as well as information on service needs and utilization.

This report provides data regarding the number and characteristics of people experiencing homelessness in San José on two mornings in January. Special attention is given to specific subpopulations, including chronically homeless, veterans, families, unaccompanied children under the age of 18, and transition-age youth between the ages of 18 and 24.

To better understand the dynamics of homelessness over time, results from previous years, including 2013 and 2015, are provided where available and applicable.

## PROJECT OVERVIEW AND GOALS

In order for the 2017 Census and Survey to best reflect the experience and expertise of the homeless community, ASR held regular planning meetings with local community members. These community members were drawn from county and city departments, community-based service providers, and other interested stakeholders. These individuals comprised the 2017 Planning Committee, and were instrumental to ensuring the 2017 City of San José Homeless Census and Survey reflected the needs and concerns of the community.

The 2017 Planning Committee worked towards several important project goals:

- To preserve current federal funding for homeless services and to enhance the ability to raise new funds;
- To improve the ability of policy makers and service providers to plan and implement services that meet the needs of the local homeless population;
- To measure changes in the numbers and characteristics of the homeless population since the 2015 Santa Clara County Homeless Census and Survey, and to track progress toward ending homelessness;
- To increase public awareness of overall homeless issues and generate support for constructive solutions; and
- To assess the status of specific subpopulations, including veterans, families, unaccompanied children, transition-age youth, and those who are chronically homeless.

---

<sup>1</sup> Significant deduplication efforts were made in 2017 to ensure unaccompanied children and youth were not captured in both the youth and general street count efforts. For more information on these efforts and the overall count methodology, please see Appendix A.

This report is intended to assist service providers; policy makers; funders; and local, state, and federal government in gaining a better understanding of the population currently experiencing homelessness, measuring the impact of current policies and programming, and planning for the future.

## **FEDERAL DEFINITION OF HOMELESSNESS FOR POINT-IN-TIME COUNTS**

In this study, the HUD definition of homelessness for the Census and Survey is used. This definition includes individuals and families:

- Living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangement; or
- With a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground.



# Point-In-Time Census

The 2017 City of San José and County of Santa Clara Homeless Census and Survey included a complete enumeration of all unsheltered and publicly sheltered homeless persons. The general street count was conducted on January 24 and 25, 2017 from approximately 5:30 a.m. to noon and covered all of the 1,307 square miles of Santa Clara County and all of the City of San José. The shelter count was conducted on the night of the 24th and included all individuals staying in: emergency shelters, transitional housing facilities, and domestic violence shelters. The general street count and shelter count methodology were similar to those used in 2015, with some small improvements. These different components led to the creation of two separate reports, one focused on the County of Santa Clara and one focused on the City of San José.

The methodology used for the 2017 City of San José Homeless Census and Survey is commonly described as a “blitz count” since it is conducted by a large team over a very short period of time. As this method is conducted in San José the result is an observation based count of individuals and families who appear to be homeless. The count is then followed by an in-person representative survey, the results of which are used to profile and estimate the condition and characteristics of the local homeless population. Information collected from the survey is used to fulfill HUD reporting requirements, and to inform local service delivery and strategic planning efforts.

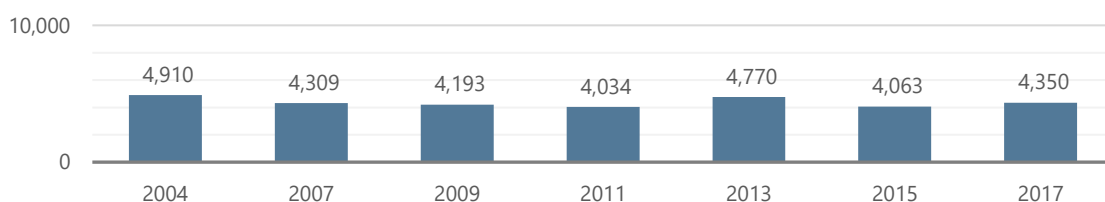
In a continuing effort to improve data on the extent of youth homelessness, Santa Clara County also conducted a dedicated youth count similar to the one conducted in 2015. The dedicated youth count methodology was improved in 2017 to better ensure that unaccompanied children and transition-age youth were not included in both the general street count and youth count. For more information regarding the dedicated youth count, deduplication, and project methodology, please see appendix A.

## NUMBER AND CHARACTERISTICS OF HOMELESS PERSONS IN SAN JOSÉ

There were a total of 4,350 individuals experiencing homelessness in the City of San José during the nights of January 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>. This represents an increase of 7% from 2015, and is the third highest number of individuals experiencing homelessness since 2004.

It should be noted that there were significant enhancements and outreach efforts in the dedicated youth homeless count from 2015 to 2017. The 2017 youth count improvements yielded an increase of 933 persons from the 2015 City of San José Homeless Count effort.

FIGURE 1. TOTAL NUMBER OF HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS ENUMERATED DURING THE POINT-IN-TIME HOMELESS CENSUS WITH TREND, SAN JOSÉ



Source: Applied Survey Research. (2004-2017). San José Homeless Census.

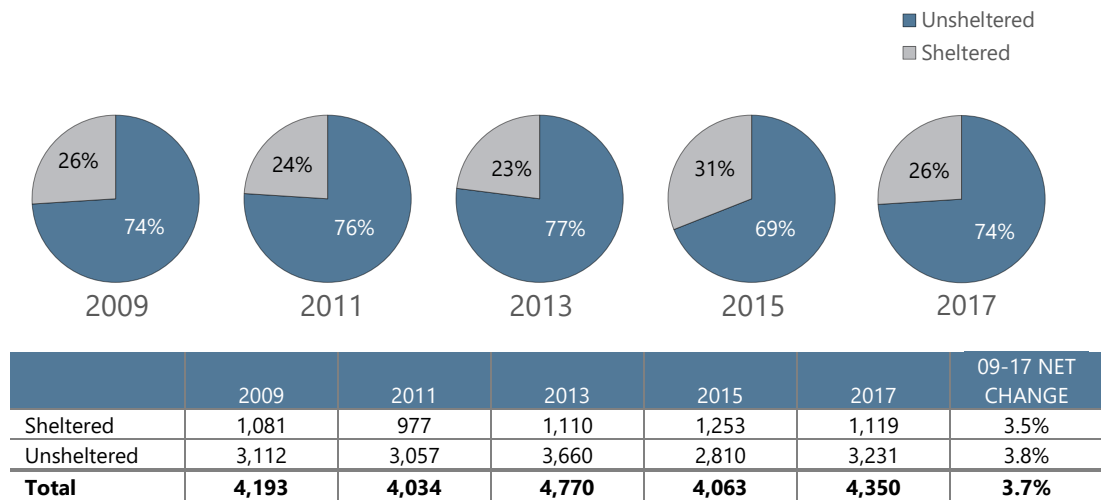
FIGURE 2. TOTAL NUMBER OF HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS ENUMERATED DURING THE POINT-IN-TIME HOMELESS CENSUS



Applied Survey Research. (2017). San José Homeless Census.

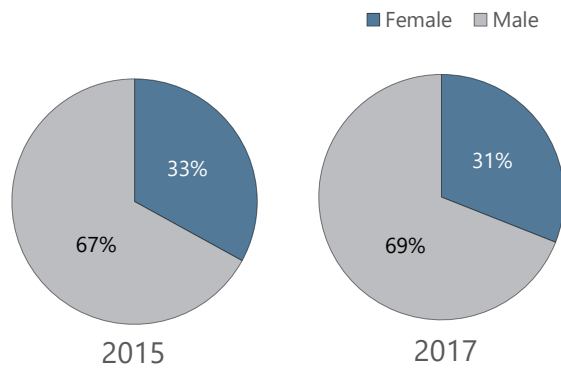
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2004-2017). San José Homeless Census.

FIGURE 3. TOTAL HOMELESS CENSUS POPULATION BY SHELTER STATUS



Source: Applied Survey Research. (2009-2017). San José Homeless Census.

FIGURE 4. TOTAL HOMELESS CENSUS POPULATION BY GENDER



2015 n=4,063; 2017 n=4,350

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015-2017). San José Homeless Census.



# Homeless Survey Findings

This section provides an overview of the findings generated from the survey component of the 2017 City of San José Homeless Census and Survey. Surveys were administered to a randomized sample of homeless individuals between February 6 and March 24, 2017. This effort resulted in 331 complete and unique surveys. Based on a Point-in-Time Count of 4,350 homeless persons, with a randomized survey sampling process, these 331 valid surveys represent a confidence interval of +/- 5% with a 95% confidence level when generalizing the results of the survey to the estimated population of homeless individuals in the City of San José. In other words, if the survey were conducted again, we can be confident that the results would likely be within 5 percentage points of the current results.

In order to respect respondent privacy and to ensure the safety and comfort of those who participated, respondents were not required to complete all survey questions. Missing values are intentionally omitted from the survey results. Therefore, the total number of respondents for each question will not always equal the total number of surveys conducted.



## SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

In order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the experiences of individuals and families experiencing homelessness in the City of San José, respondents were asked basic demographic questions including age, gender, sexual orientation, and ethnicity.

### AGE

Eleven percent (11%) of survey respondents were under the age of 25 at the time of the survey. Twenty percent (20%) were between the ages of 25 and 40, 61% were between the ages of 41 and 60, and 8% were 61 years or older.

FIGURE 5. SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY AGE

Age Group	2015	2017
Less than 18 Years	1%	<1%
18-24 Years	13%	11%
25-30 Years	5%	7%
31-40 Years	18%	13%
41-50 Years	25%	24%
51-60 Years	29%	37%
61 Years or More	9%	8%

2015 n=626; 2017 n=331

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015-2017). San José Homeless Census.

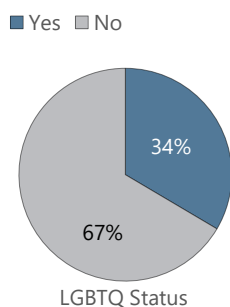
Note: Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

### GENDER AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION

One third of survey respondents (33%) identified as female, 66% identified as male, 1% identified as transgender, and 1% did not identify as male, female, or transgender. Among the female respondents, 2% indicated that they were currently pregnant. While there are limited national data on the number of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) individuals experiencing homelessness, available data suggest LGBTQ individuals experience homelessness at higher rates, especially those under the age of 25.

Thirty-four percent (34%) of survey respondents identified as LGBTQ in 2017. Of those, 84% identified as bisexual, 10% identified as gay or lesbian, 5% identified as transgender, and 5% indicated other as their sexual orientation.

FIGURE 6. SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND LGBTQ IDENTITY



Breakout of Respondents Answering Yes	%	n
Gay	3%	3
Lesbian	7%	8
Queer	0%	0
Bisexual	84%	93
Transgender	5%	5
Other	5%	6

LGBTQ 2017 n=331; Breakout n=111 respondents offering 115 responses

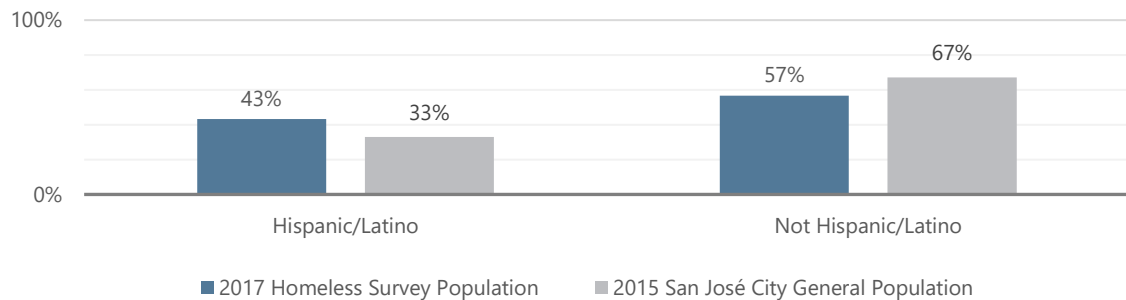
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2017). San José Homeless Census.

Note: Multiple response question. Percentages may not add up to 100.

## RACE/ETHNICITY

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) gathers data on race and ethnicity in two separate questions, similar to the U.S. Census. When asked if they identified as a Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, over two-fifths (43%) of survey respondents identified as Hispanic or Latino. In comparison to the general population of San José, a higher percentage of respondents experiencing homelessness identified as Hispanic or Latino (43% compared to 33% in 2015). Forty-one percent (41%) of respondents identified as White, 23% as Other, 15% as Black or African American, 14% as American Indian or Alaska Native, 4% as Asian, and 3% as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander.

FIGURE 7. HISPANIC OR LATINO ETHNICITY



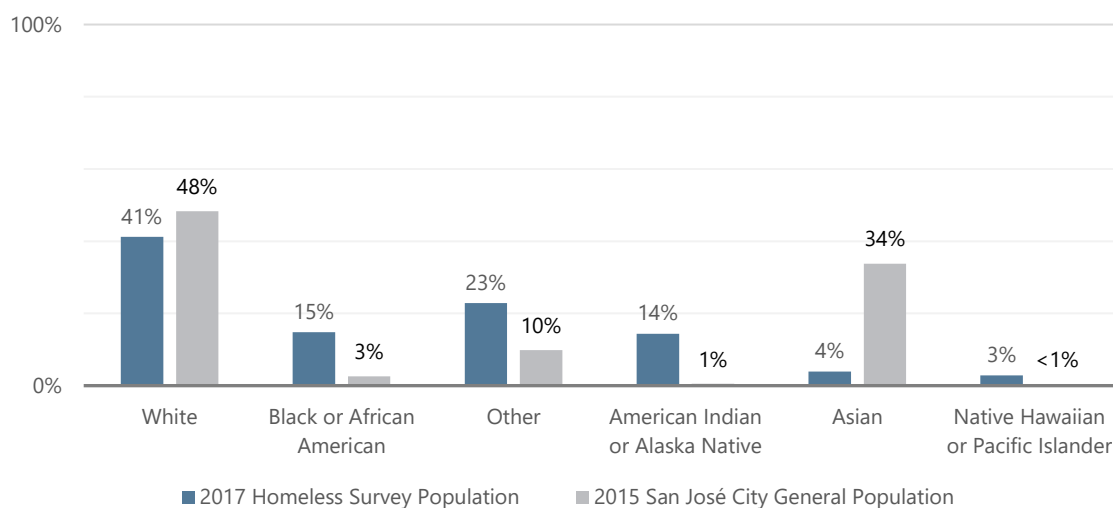
2017 n = 323

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2015-2017). Santa Clara County, California, DP05 Demographic and housing characteristics [Data]. 2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Retrieved from <https://factfinder.census.gov>

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

When asked about their racial identity, differences between the survey respondents and the general population were more distinct. Much higher percentages of respondents identified as Black or African-American (15% of survey respondents compared to 3% San José's general population) and as Multi-Racial (23% compared to 10%), while a much smaller percentage identified as Asian compared to that reported by the city's general population (4% to 34%).

FIGURE 8. RACE



2017 n = 284

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015-2017). *San José Homeless Census*.

U.S. Census Bureau. (January 2017). *American Community Survey 2015 1-Year Estimates, Table DP05: ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates*. Retrieved from <http://factfinder2.census.gov>

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

## HISTORY OF FOSTER CARE

Nationally, it is generally estimated that at least 20% of foster youth experience homelessness after exiting the foster care system.<sup>2</sup> In the State of California, foster youth are now eligible to receive extended care benefits as they transition into adulthood, up until their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. Implemented since 2012, the aim of extended foster care is to assist foster youth with the transition to independence and prevent them from experiencing homelessness.

In 2017, 11% of survey respondents reported a history of foster care, lower than that of 2015 (18%). The percentage of youth under the age of 25 who had been in foster care immediately before experiencing homelessness was higher than that of adults over the age of 25; 9% compared to less than 1%.

FIGURE 9. HISTORY OF FOSTER CARE



2015 n=595; 2017 n=328

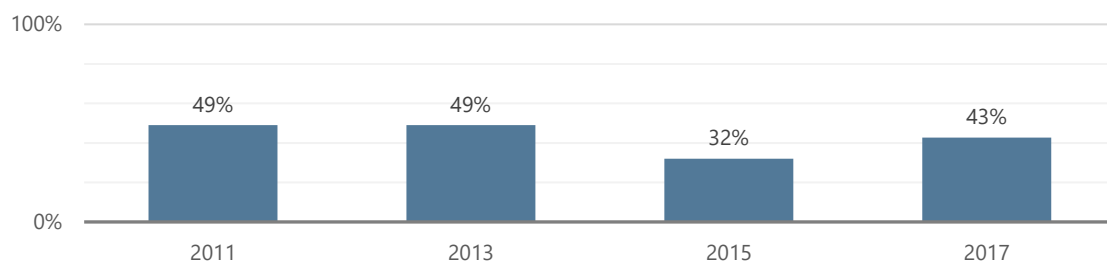
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015-2017). San José Homeless Census.

<sup>2</sup> Fernandes, AL. (2007). Runaway and Homeless Youth: Demographics, Programs, and Emerging Issues. Congressional Research Services, January 2007, <http://www.endhomelessness.org/content/general/detail/1451>.

## RECURRENCE OF HOMELESSNESS

Unstable living conditions, poverty, housing scarcity, and many other issues often lead to individuals falling in and out of homelessness. For many, the experience of homelessness is part of a long and recurring history of housing instability. More than half (57%) of 2017 survey respondents reported previously experiencing homelessness, compared to 68% of 2015 respondents.

FIGURE 10. FIRST TIME EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS (RESPONDENTS ANSWERING “YES”)

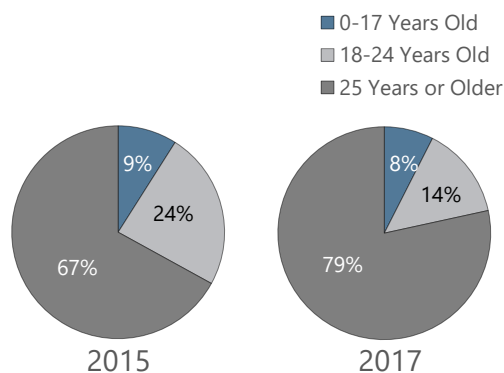


2011 n=674; 2013 n=456; 2015 n=616; 2017 n=330

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2011-2017). San José Homeless Census.

In an effort to better understand the experiences and age distribution of those experiencing homelessness, respondents were asked how old they were the first time they experienced homelessness. Eight percent (8%) of respondents reported that they were under the age of 18, 14% reported they were between the ages of 18-24, and 79% reported they were 25 or older.

FIGURE 11. AGE AT FIRST EXPERIENCE OF HOMELESSNESS



2015 n=600; 2017 n=320

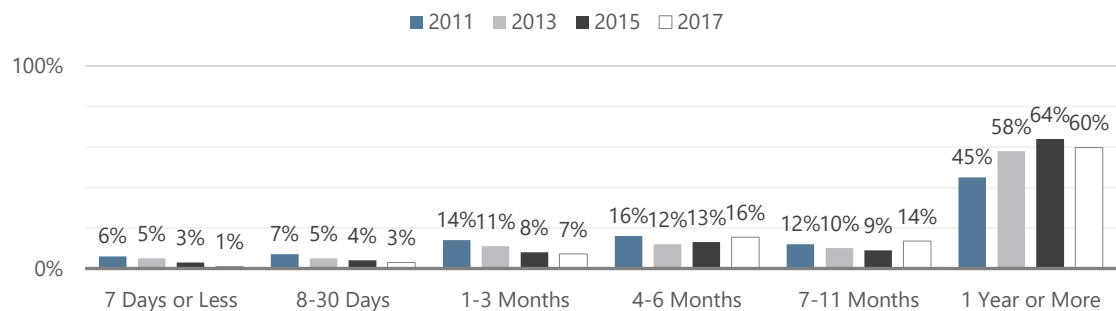
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015-2017). San José Homeless Census.

## DURATION OF HOMELESSNESS

Many individuals who experience homelessness will do so numerous times. As people cycle in and out of stable housing, it becomes important to keep track of the number of times they experience literal homelessness.

When asked how long they had been experiencing homelessness for this current episode, a majority (60%) indicated experiencing homelessness for a year or more, just lower than 64% of respondents in 2015. Among those respondents whom had previously experienced homelessness in the past three years, 31% reported experiencing homelessness twice, 25% indicated three times, and 21% noted four or more times.

FIGURE 12. LENGTH OF CURRENT EPISODE OF HOMELESSNESS



2011 n=661; 2013 n=449; 2015 n=602; 2017 n= 330

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2011-2017). San José Homeless Census.



## LIVING ACCOMMODATIONS

Where individuals lived prior to experiencing homelessness and where they have lived since impacts the way they seek services, as well as their ability to access support from friends or family. Previous circumstances can also point to gaps in the system of care, and opportunities for systemic improvement and homeless prevention.

Survey respondents reported many different living accommodations prior to experiencing homelessness, although most lived in or around Santa Clara County with friends, family, or on their own or with a partner in a home or apartment.

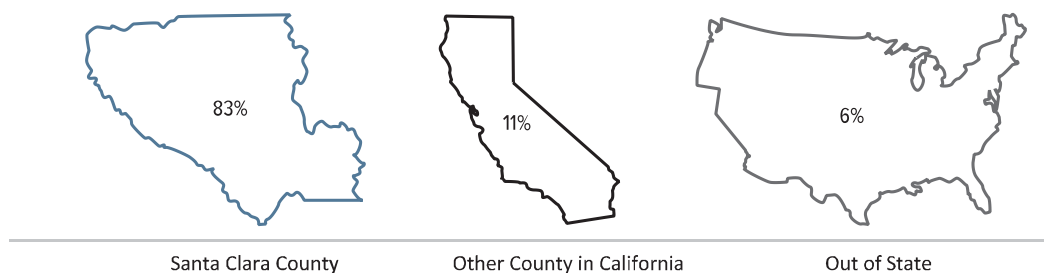
### PLACE OF RESIDENCE

Knowing where individuals were living before they most recently lost their housing informs discussions regarding how local the homeless population is to the region. This information can also influence changes to available support systems if the Continuum of Care finds increasing numbers of individuals living locally before experiencing homelessness.

During the 2017 City of San José Homeless survey, 83% of survey respondents reported they were living in Santa Clara County at the time they most recently experienced homelessness, similar to that reported in 2015 (84%). Of those, over half (57%) had lived in Santa Clara County for 10 years or more and 7% had lived in Santa Clara for less than one year.

Eleven percent (11%) of respondents reported that they were living in another county in California prior to losing housing, whereas 6% of respondents reported that they were living out of state.

FIGURE 13. PLACE OF RESIDENCE AT TIME OF HOUSING LOSS



2017 n=327

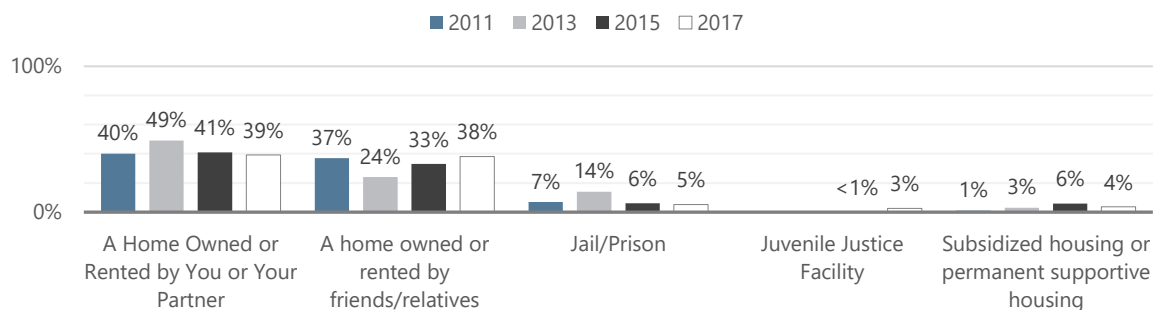
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2017). *San José Homeless Census*.

## PRIOR LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

Similar to previous place of residence, the type of living arrangements maintained by individuals before experiencing homelessness can influence what types of homeless prevention services might be offered to help individuals maintain their housing.

A sizeable minority (39%) of respondents indicated living in a home owned or rented by themselves or their partner, down from 41% in 2015. Thirty-eight percent (38%) of respondents indicated staying with friends or relatives prior to losing housing, up from 33% in 2015. Five percent (5%) reported living in a jail or prison, and 3% reported living in a juvenile justice facility. Four percent (4%) reported living in subsidized housing or permanent supportive housing immediately before experiencing homelessness.

FIGURE 14. LIVING ARRANGEMENTS IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO BECOMING HOMELESS THIS TIME



2011 n=671; 2013 n=435; 2015 n=590; 2017 n=323

Note: Juvenile Justice Facility was not a response option in 2011 and 2013.

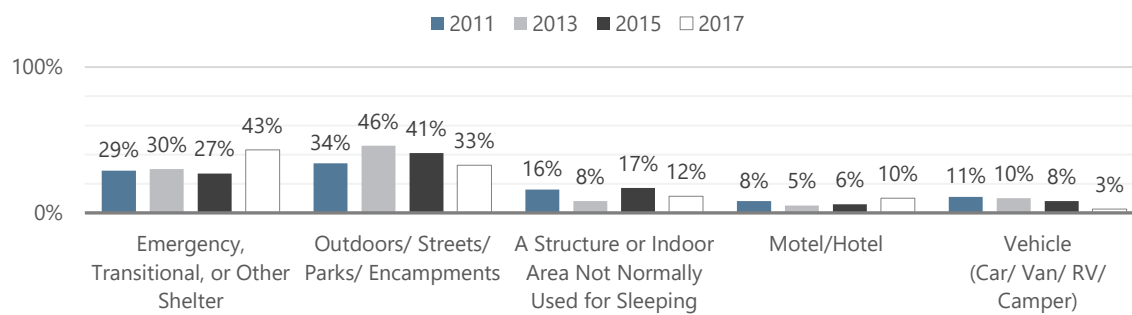
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2011-2017). San José Homeless Census.

## CURRENT LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

While basic information on where individuals were observed during the general street count effort is collected, survey respondents are also asked about their usual nighttime accommodations. Understanding the types of places individuals experiencing homelessness are sleeping can help inform local outreach efforts.

Forty-three percent (43%) reported staying in an emergency, transitional, or other shelter. A third (33%) of survey respondents reported currently living outdoors, including on the streets, in parks, or in encampment areas. Twelve percent (12%) reported that they were sleeping in a structure or indoor area not normally used for sleeping, including kitchens, hallways, foyers, hallways, or other indoor locations not meant for human habitation. A tenth (10%) indicated living in a motel or hotel, and 3% reported living in vehicles.

FIGURE 15. USUAL PLACES TO SLEEP AT NIGHT



2011 n=674; 2013 n=452; 2015 n=609; 2017 n=331

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2011-2017). San José Homeless Census.

Note: 2013 response option specified that motel/hotel was paid for by an ad agency.

## PERSONS RESIDING IN ENCAMPMENT AREAS

There were 643 individuals experiencing homelessness enumerated in encampment areas in the City of San José. This represents a decrease of 17% from 778 in 2015 and continues a downward trend from 2013, when 1,230 individuals were enumerated in encampment areas. From 2013 to 2017, the number of individuals living encampments has fallen by 48%. Individuals identified in encampments represented 15% of the overall population experiencing homelessness, a decrease from 2015 (19%) and 2013 (26%).

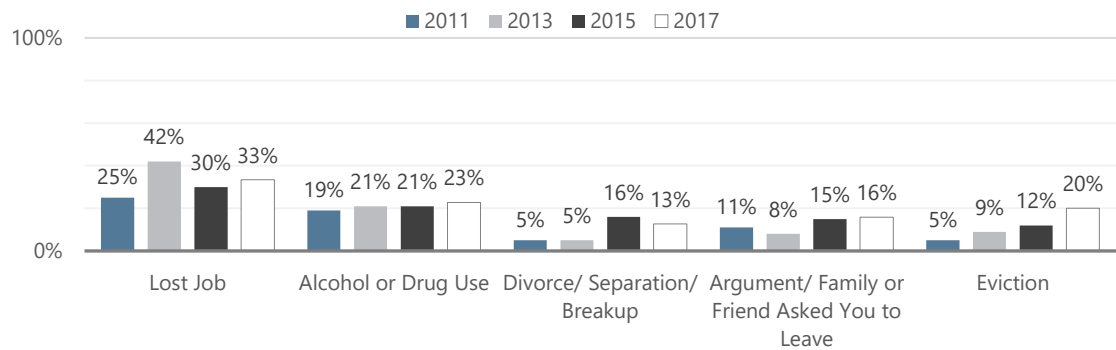
## PRIMARY CAUSE OF HOMELESSNESS

The primary cause of an individual's inability to obtain or retain housing is often difficult to pinpoint, as it is often the result of multiple and compounding causes. One-third (33%) of survey respondents reported job loss as the primary cause of their homelessness, up from 30% in 2015. Twenty-three percent (23%) reported alcohol or drug use, up from 21% in 2015, followed by eviction, which also saw a big increase from 2015 (20% compared to 12%).

Many respondents reported personal relationships as the cause of their homelessness. Sixteen percent (16%) reported an argument with family or friends who asked them to leave, similar to that reported in 2015 (15%). Divorce, separation, or breakup accounted for 13% of the primary causes or events leading to homelessness, down from 16% in 2015.

Other reported causes included incarceration (6%), mental health issues (6%), family violence (6%), and rent increase by landlord (3%). Less than one percent (1%) reported hospitalization or treatment leading to their current episode of homelessness.

FIGURE 16. PRIMARY CAUSE OF HOMELESSNESS



2011 n=667; 2013 n=443 respondents offering 566 responses; 2015 n=611 respondents offering 897 responses; 2017 n=329 respondents offering 463 responses

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2011-2017). San José Homeless Census.

## OBSTACLES TO OBTAINING PERMANENT HOUSING

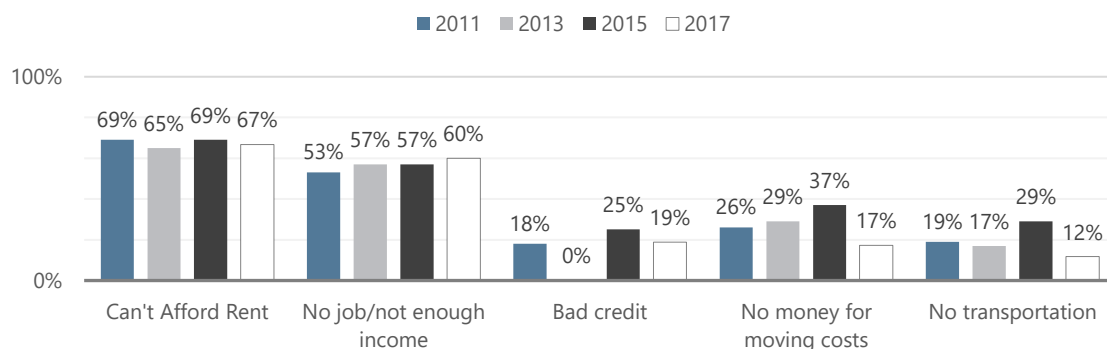
Many individuals experiencing homelessness face significant barriers in obtaining permanent housing. These barriers can range from housing affordability and availability to accessing the economic and social supports (e.g. increased income, rental assistance, and case management) needed to access and maintain permanent housing.

Respondents were also asked what prevented them from obtaining housing. Most reported multiple obstacles, often a mixture of income or access-related issues. A solid majority (67%) of respondents reported the inability to afford rent, down from 69% reported in 2015. Sixty percent (60%) reported lack of a job or not enough income, poor credit (19%), and lacking money for moving costs (17%). Access related issues included no transportation (12%), down from 29% reported in 2015.

When asked what would help them obtain permanent housing, 40% reported alcohol or drug counseling, rent or mortgage assistance (35%), employment assistance (27%), mental health services (15%), legal assistance (14%), and help accessing benefits (9%).

A vast majority (91%) reported that they would accept permanent housing if it became available. For those reporting that they did not access or receive shelter services, respondents cited several reasons for this, including that shelters had too many rules (24%), they were too full (19%), they did not accept any pets (19%), they were too crowded (18%), and there was nowhere to store belongings (18%).

FIGURE 17. OBSTACLES TO OBTAINING PERMANENT HOUSING



2011 n=667 respondents giving 1,568 responses; 2013 n=414 respondents giving 995 responses; 2015 n=593 respondents giving 2,001 responses; 2017 n=324 respondents giving 724 responses

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2011-2017). San José Homeless Census.

Note: Multiple response question. Percentages may not add up to 100.

## SERVICES AND ASSISTANCE

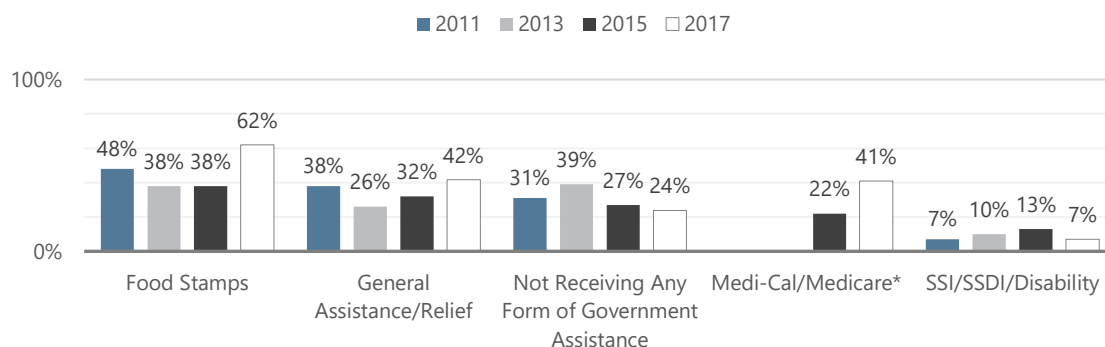
The City of San José provides services and assistance to those currently experiencing homelessness through federal and local programs. Government assistance and homeless services work to enable individuals and families to obtain income and support. However, many individuals and families do not apply for services. Many believe that they do not qualify or are ineligible for assistance. Connecting homeless individuals and families to these support services creates a bridge to mainstream support services and prevents future housing instability.

### GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE

There are a variety of forms of governmental assistance available to individuals experiencing homelessness. However, knowledge of services available, understanding of eligibility requirements, and perceived stigma of receiving governmental assistance can all impact the rate at which eligible individuals access these supports. Generally accessing services improved in assisted categories.

Three-quarters of survey respondents (76%) reported receiving some form of government assistance, up from 73% in 2015. The most common types of assistance individuals received in the City of San José were food stamps/SNAP/WIC/CalFresh (62%), General Assistance/CAAP (42%), Medi-Cal/Medicare (41%), SSI/SSDI/Disability (7%), and Social Security (6%).

FIGURE 18. GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE RECEIVED



2011 n=663 respondents offering 916 responses; 2013 n=437 respondents offering 537 responses; 2015 n=580 respondents offering 855 responses; 2017 n=315 respondents offering 586 responses

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2011-2017). San José Homeless Census.

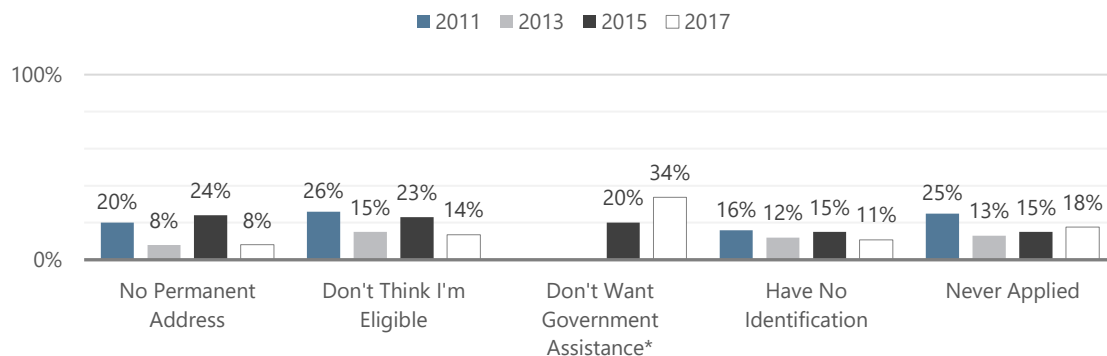
Note: Multiple response question. Percentages may not add up to 100.

\* Medi-Cal/Medicare was added as a response option in 2015.

Of those who reported not receiving any form of government support, 34% indicated that they were not interested in receiving support. Less than one-fifth (18%) reported that they had never applied. Other frequently cited reasons for not accessing or receiving services included respondents reporting that they thought they might not be eligible (14%), and having no identification or no permanent address (11% and 8%, respectively).



FIGURE 19. REASONS FOR NOT RECEIVING GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE



2011 n=195 respondents offering 341 responses; 2013 n=168 respondents offering 220 responses; 2015 n=143 respondents offering 218 responses; 2017 n= 74 respondents offering 86 responses

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2011-2017). San José Homeless Census.

Note: Multiple response question. Percentages may not add up to 100.

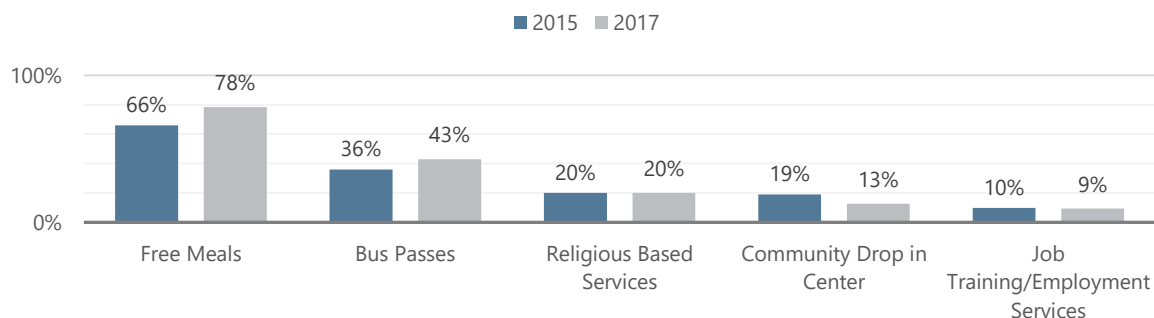
\*In 2013 the response option changed from "do not need" to "do not want."

## SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

In addition to governmental assistance, there are numerous community-based services and programs made available to individuals experiencing homelessness. These services range from day shelters and meal programs to job training and healthcare.

A large majority of respondents (86%) reported accessing or receiving services. Of these services, most respondents reported receiving free meals (78%), up from 66% reported in 2015. Other types of services or programs accessed in the City of San José included bus passes (43%), religious based services (20%), community drop in centers (13%), and job training/employment services (9%). Though less frequent, respondents also indicated receiving outreach services (7%), legal assistance (5%), behavioral health services (4%), and immigration services (1%).

FIGURE 20. SERVICES OR ASSISTANCE



2015 n=577 respondents offering 1,260 responses; 2017 n=323 respondents offering 648 responses

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015-2017). San José Homeless Census.

Note: Multiple response question. Percentages may not add up to 100.

Note: In 2015, the Community Drop In Center response option was Shelter Day Services

## EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME

While the majority of survey respondents reported being unemployed, a number reported part-time or full-time work and many were receiving an income, either public or private. Despite this income, data suggest that employment and income were not enough to meet basic needs.

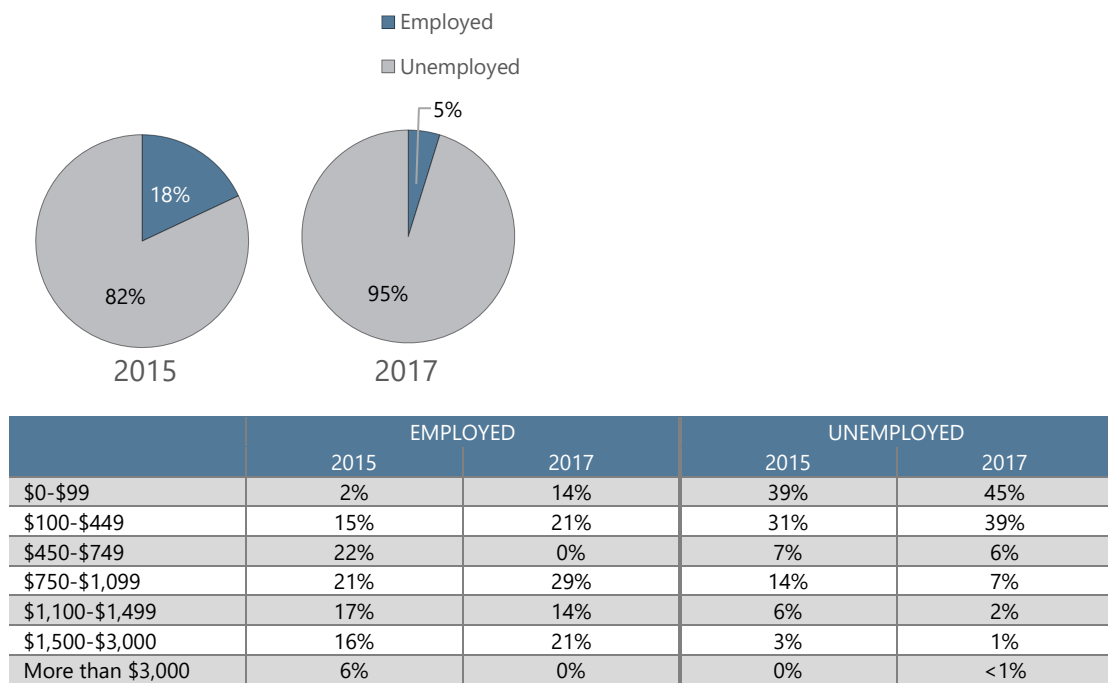
The unemployment rate in the San José-Sunnyvale metropolitan area was 3.7 in January 2017 was at 3.7%, slightly down from 4.9% in 2015.<sup>3</sup> It is important to recognize that the unemployment rate represents only those who are unemployed and actively seeking employment. It does not represent all joblessness, nor does it address the types of available employment. The unemployment rate for respondents experiencing homelessness was 95%, a slight increase from 82% in 2015. Of the respondents who indicated that they were unemployed, more than half (56%) reported that they were currently looking for work, almost a fifth (19%) were unable to work, and one quarter (25%) reported that they were not looking for work.

Income from all sources varied between those with employment including those who are fulltime and those who were unemployed. Less than half (45%) of unemployed respondents reported an income of \$99 or less per month, in comparison to 14% of those who were employed. Unemployed income is typically from government services, benefits, recycling, or panhandling. Overall income for those with employment was higher than those without. For example, almost two-thirds (64%) of employed respondents reported making between \$750 and \$3,000 per month, compared to 11% of unemployed respondents. Eighty-nine percent (89%) of the survey respondents who were unemployed reported a total monthly income of \$749 or less, compared to 36% of those who were employed.

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<sup>3</sup> State of California Employment Development Department. (2017). Unemployment Rates (Labor Force). Retrieved 2017 from <http://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov>

FIGURE 21. EMPLOYMENT AND MONTHLY INCOME



2015 employment status n=626; Income employed n=104; Income unemployed n=503; 2017 employment status n=310; 2017 Income employed n=14; 2017 Income unemployed n=296

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015-2017). San José Homeless Census.

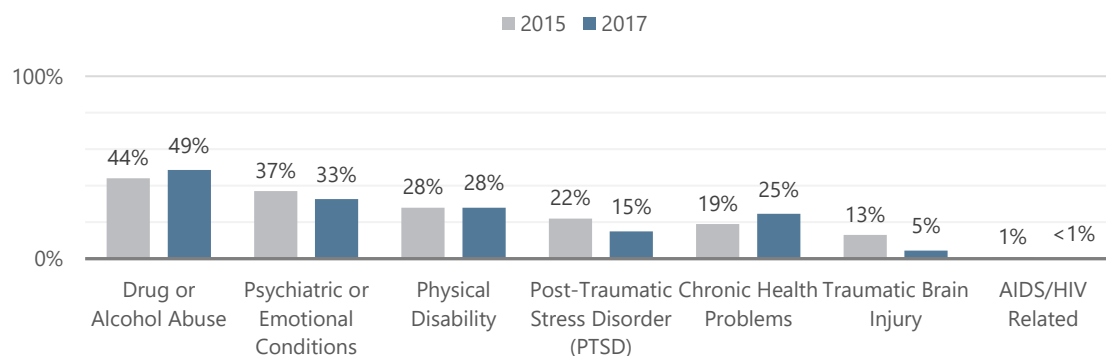
Note: Respondents were challenged by this income question and the low response for employed income is subject to a high margin of error.

## HEALTH

The average life expectancy for individuals experiencing homelessness is 25 years less than those in stable housing. Without regular access to healthcare and without safe and stable housing, individuals experience preventable illness and often endure longer hospitalizations. It is estimated that those experiencing homelessness stay four days (or 36%) longer per hospital admission than non-homeless patients.<sup>4</sup>

In the City of San José, approximately seven out of ten (70%) survey respondents reported having at least one or more disabling conditions including chronic physical illness, chronic substance abuse, and severe mental illness. The most frequently reported disabling health condition was drug or alcohol abuse. This was up from 2015 (49% compared to 44%). Psychiatric or emotional conditions was also a frequent response, down from 37% in 2015 compared to 33% in 2017. Physical disability remained unchanged at 28% for 2015 and 2017.

FIGURE 22. HEALTH CONDITIONS



2015 n=580-598; 2017 n=309-325

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015-2017). San José Homeless Census.

Note: Multiple response question. Percentages may not add up to 100.

<sup>4</sup> Sharon A. Salit, M. E. (1998). Hospitalization Costs Associated with Homelessness in New York City. New England Journal of Medicine, 338, 1734-1740.

## DOMESTIC/PARTNER VIOLENCE OR ABUSE

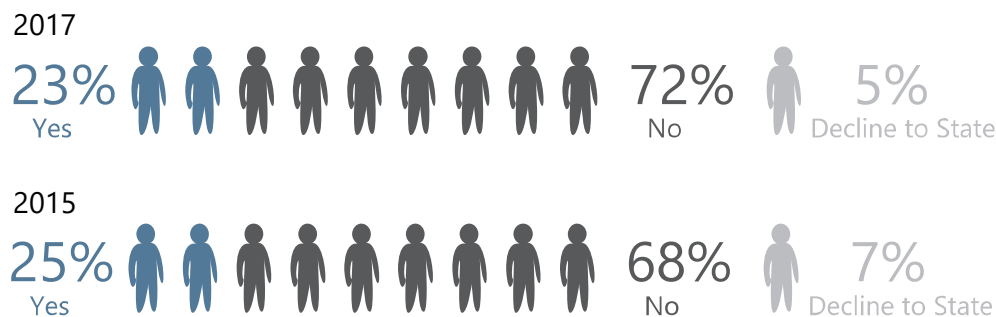
Histories of domestic violence and partner abuse are prevalent among individuals experiencing homelessness, and can be the primary cause of homelessness for many. Survivors often lack many of the financial resources required for housing, as their employment history or dependable income may be limited.

Three percent (3%) of survey respondents reported that they were currently experiencing domestic violence or partner abuse. Family violence (13%) and spousal or partner violence (7%) were indicated as primary causes leading to homelessness among survey respondents.

When analyzed by gender, 9% of female respondents and less than 1% of male respondents were currently experiencing domestic violence at the time of the survey. Compared to 2015, a slightly lower percentage of total respondents (23%) reported having experienced domestic violence in their lifetime, compared to that reported in 2015 (25%).

Among respondents who reported any experience of physical, emotional or sexual abuse by a relative or another person they stayed, those identifying as female (37%), and male (16%) represented the groups in the gender analysis for those whom have experienced domestic violence in their lifetime.

FIGURE 23. HISTORY OF DOMESTIC ABUSE



2015 n=590; 2017 n=326

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015-2017). San José Homeless Census.

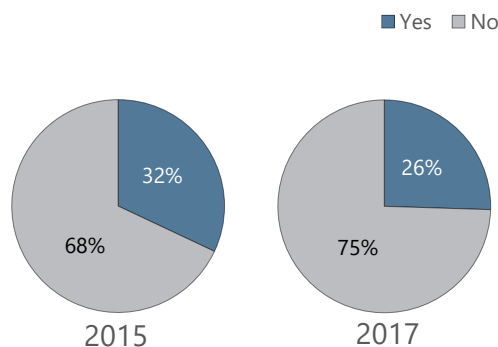
## CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Homelessness and incarceration are often correlative. Individuals without stable housing are at greater risk of criminal justice system involvement, particularly those with mental health issues, veterans, and youth. Individuals with past incarceration face significant barriers to exiting homelessness due to stigmatization and policies affecting their ability to gain employment and access housing opportunities.<sup>5</sup>

### INCARCERATION

When asked if they had spent a night in jail or prison in the last 12 months, roughly one-quarter (26%) of survey respondents reported that they had spent at least one night in jail or prison. Approximately 5% of respondents reported being in jail or prison immediately before experiencing homelessness, while a small minority (16%) reported currently being on probation or parole at the time the 2017 City of San José survey was conducted. For those respondents who were formerly incarcerated, a vast majority (91%) had not accessed re-entry services.

FIGURE 24. SPENT A NIGHT IN JAIL OR PRISON IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS



2015 n=593; 2017 n=326

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015-2017). San José Homeless Census.

Note: Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100%

<sup>5</sup> Greenberg, GA, Rosenheck, RA. (2008). Jail Incarceration, Homelessness, and Mental Health: A National Study. *Psychiatr Serv*, 2008 Feb;59(2): 170-7.





# HUD Defined Subpopulations

*Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness* outlines national objectives and evaluative measures for ending homelessness in the United States. In order to adequately address the diversity within the population experiencing homelessness, the federal government identifies four subpopulations with particular challenges or needs. Consequently, these subpopulations represent important reportable indicators for measuring local progress toward ending homelessness.

The following sections examine each of these four subpopulations, identifying the number and characteristics of individuals included in the 2017 City of San José Homeless Point-in-Time Count and Survey.

Of the 331 surveys completed in 2017, the results represent 153 chronically homeless individuals, 21 homeless veterans, 9 individuals in homeless families,<sup>6</sup> and 34 unaccompanied children and transition-age youth. Surveys were completed in unsheltered environments and transitional housing settings.

## CHRONICALLY HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines a chronically homeless individual as someone who has experienced homelessness for a year or longer, or who has experienced at least four episodes of homelessness in the last three years, *and* also has a condition that prevents them from maintaining work or housing. This definition applies to individuals as well as heads of household who meet the definition.

The chronically homeless population represents one of the most vulnerable populations on the street; the mortality rate for those experiencing chronic homelessness is four to nine times higher than the general population.<sup>7</sup> Data from communities across the country show that public costs incurred by those experiencing extended periods of homelessness include emergency room visits, interactions with law enforcement, incarceration, and regular access

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<sup>6</sup> Homeless families continue to be underrepresented in the City of San José Homeless Survey data. The majority of homeless families in the City of San José are currently residing in shelters and transitional housing facilities. As a result homeless families are difficult to reach.

<sup>7</sup> United States Interagency Council on Homelessness. (2010). Supplemental Document to the Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness: June 2010. Retrieved 2017 from [https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset\\_library/BkgrdPap\\_ChronicHomelessness.pdf](https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/BkgrdPap_ChronicHomelessness.pdf)

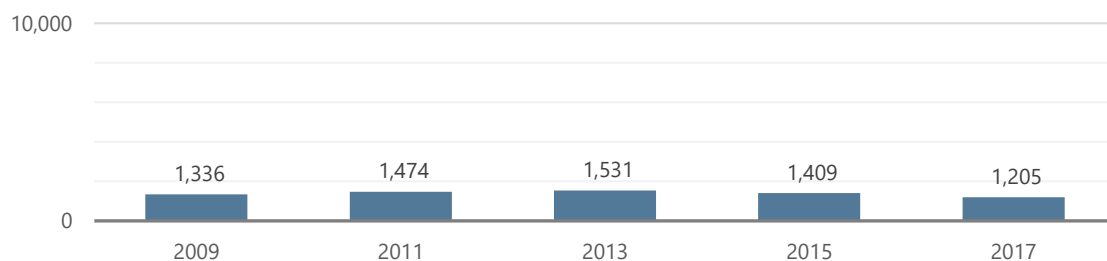
to social supports and homeless services. These combined costs are often significantly higher than the cost of providing individuals with permanent housing and supportive services.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development reported that roughly 22% of the national homeless population, or 77,486 individuals, was chronically homeless in 2016.<sup>8</sup> Chronic homelessness has been on the decline in recent years, as communities across the country increase the capacity of their permanent supportive housing programs and prioritize those with the greatest barriers to housing stability. While the national decrease in chronic homelessness seems promising, federal budget constraints limit the amount of money available to support housing programs and services. As a result, *Opening Doors*, which began with a plan to end chronic homelessness by 2016, has extended the goal to 2017.<sup>9</sup>

### CHRONICALLY HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS

There a total of 1,205 individuals experiencing chronic homelessness in the City of San José 2017, a decrease of 14% from 2015. It also marks the lowest number of chronically homeless individuals enumerated in San José since before 2009.

FIGURE 25. TOTAL NUMBER OF CHRONICALLY HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS ENUMERATED DURING THE POINT-IN-TIME HOMELESS CENSUS WITH TREND

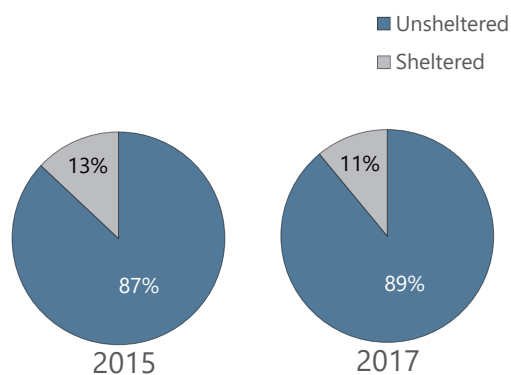


Source: Applied Survey Research. (2009-2017). San José Homeless Census.

8 Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2016). Annual Assessment Report to Congress. Retrieved 2017 from <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/2016-AHAR-Part-1.pdf>

9 Cavallaro, E. (2017). Ending Chronic Homelessness, Now in 2017. National Alliance to End Homelessness. Retrieved 2017 from <http://www.endhomelessness.org>

FIGURE 26. CHRONICALLY HOMELESS CENSUS POPULATION BY SHELTER STATUS



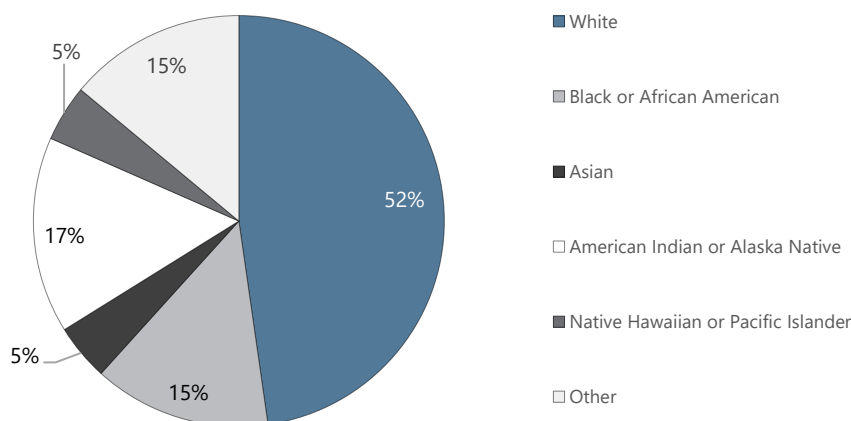
2015 n=1,409; 2017 n=1,205

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015-2017). San José Homeless Census.

### DEMOGRAPHICS OF CHRONICALLY HOMELESS SURVEY RESPONDENTS

The majority of chronically homeless individuals were male (70%), higher than the non-chronically homeless population (62%). A similar percentage of chronically homeless respondents identified as Hispanic or Latino compared to non-chronically homeless respondents (46% and 41% respectively). Five percent (5%) of chronically homeless respondents identified as veterans.

FIGURE 27. RACE AMONG PERSONS EXPERIENCING CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS



Chronic Survey Population n: 126

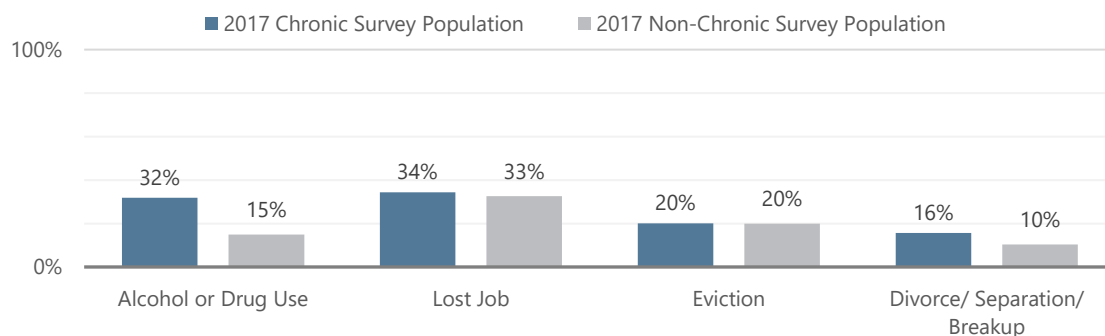
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2017). Santa Clara Homeless Census.

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

### PRIMARY CAUSE OF HOMELESSNESS AMONG THOSE EXPERIENCING CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

Over half (32%) of chronically homeless survey respondents identified alcohol or drug use as a primary cause of their homelessness; this was an increase compared to 29% in 2015 and much higher than the non-chronic survey population (15%). While chronically homeless respondents reported some similarities in the initial cause of their homelessness compared to non-chronic respondents, breakups, separations, and divorces, was a much more common cause of homelessness among chronic respondents compared to non-chronic respondents.

FIGURE 28. PRIMARY CAUSE OF HOMELESSNESS, CHRONIC AND NON-CHRONIC COMPARISON



Chronic Survey Population n=154 offering 238 responses; Non-Chronic Survey Population n=175 respondents offering 225 responses

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2017). San José Homeless Census.

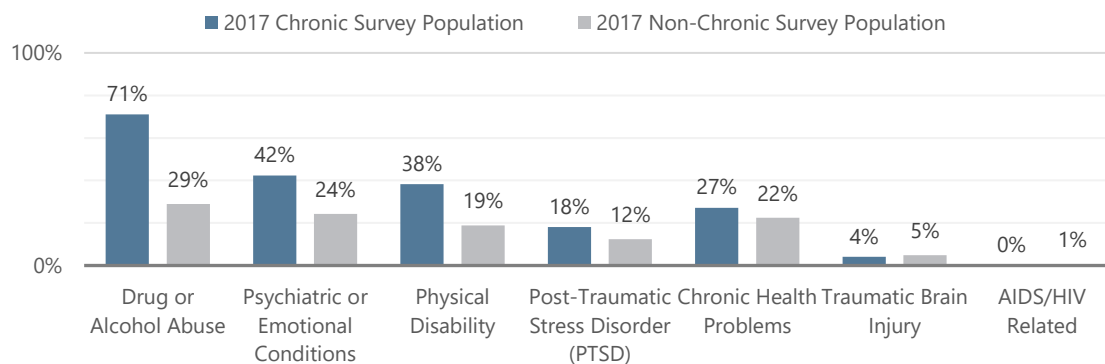
Note: Multiple response question. Percentages may not add up to 100.

### HEALTH CONDITIONS AMONG THOSE EXPERIENCING CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

The definition of chronic homelessness requires a condition that prevents an individual from maintaining work or housing, and many respondents reported experiencing multiple physical or mental health conditions. Seventy-one percent (71%) of chronically homeless survey respondents reported alcohol or substance use. Forty-two percent (42%) reported a psychiatric or emotional condition, while 38% reported a physical disability.

In general, higher rates of health conditions were reported for those who were chronically homeless compared to their non-chronically homeless counterparts.

FIGURE 29. HEALTH CONDITIONS, CHRONIC AND NON-CHRONIC COMPARISON



Chronic Survey Population n=140-152; Non-Chronic Survey Population n=168-174

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2017). San José Homeless Census.

Note: Multiple response question. Percentages may not add up to 100.

## HOMELESS VETERAN STATUS

Many U.S. veterans experience conditions that place them at increased risk for homelessness. Veterans experience higher rates of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injury (TBI), sexual assault, and substance abuse. Veterans experiencing homelessness are more likely to live on the street than in shelters, and often remain on the street for extended periods of time.

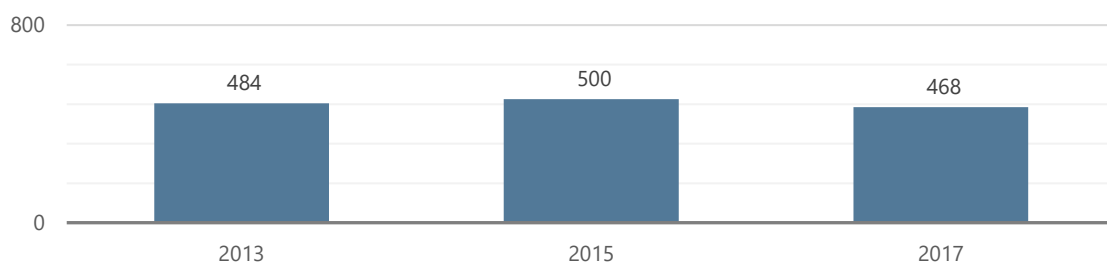
The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provides a broad range of benefits and services to veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces. These benefits can involve different forms of financial assistance, including monthly cash payments to disabled veterans, health care, education, and housing benefits. In addition to these supports, the VA and HUD partner to provide additional housing and support services to veterans' currently experiencing homelessness or at risk of experiencing homeless.

Between 2009 and 2016, there has been a 48% decrease in the number of homeless veterans nationwide. According to data collected during the national 2016 Point-in-Time Count, 39,471 veterans experienced homelessness across the country on a single night in January 2016.<sup>10</sup>

### HOMELESS VETERAN STATUS

There were a total of 468 veterans experiencing homeless in the City of San José, a decrease of 6% from 2015. Fifty-nine percent of veterans experiencing homelessness were living unsheltered. Veterans made up 11% of the overall homeless population.

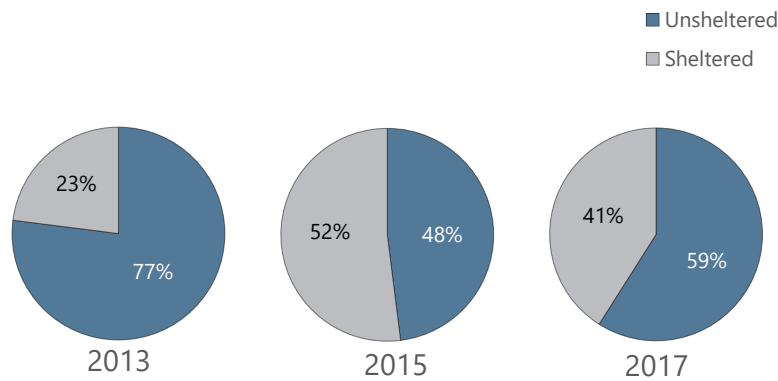
FIGURE 30. TOTAL NUMBER OF HOMELESS VETERANS ENUMERATED DURING THE POINT-IN-TIME HOMELESS CENSUS WITH TREND



Source: Applied Survey Research. (2013-2017). *San José Homeless Census*.

<sup>10</sup> Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2017). Annual Assessment Report to Congress. Retrieved 2017 from <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/2014-AHAR-Part1.pdf>

FIGURE 31. SHELTER STATUS AMONG VETERANS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS



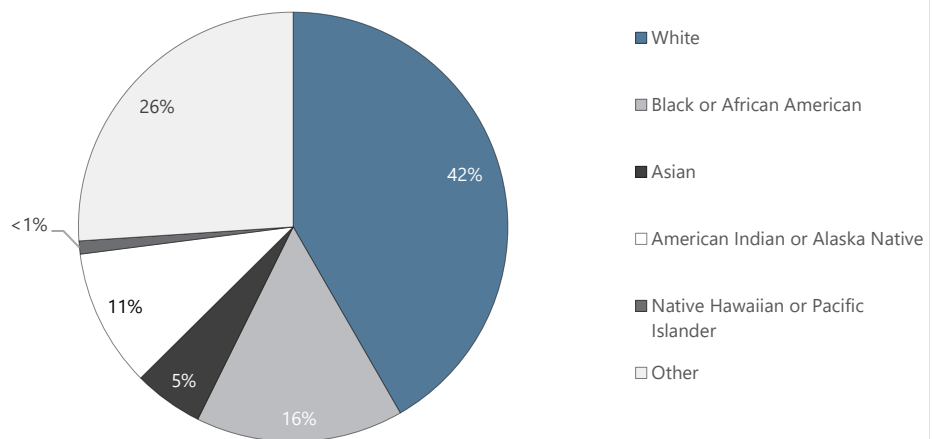
2013 n=484; 2015 n=500; 2017 n=468

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2013-2017). San José Homeless Census.

### DEMOGRAPHICS OF HOMELESS VETERANS

Eighty-six percent (86%) of veteran survey respondents identified as male, 10% female, and 5% did not identify as male, female, or transgender. Forty-seven percent (47%) of veterans identified as Hispanic or Latino, similar to the non-veteran respondents (43%). Forty-two percent (42%) of veterans reported their racial identity as white and 16% black or African American.

FIGURE 32. RACE AMONG HOMELESS VETERANS



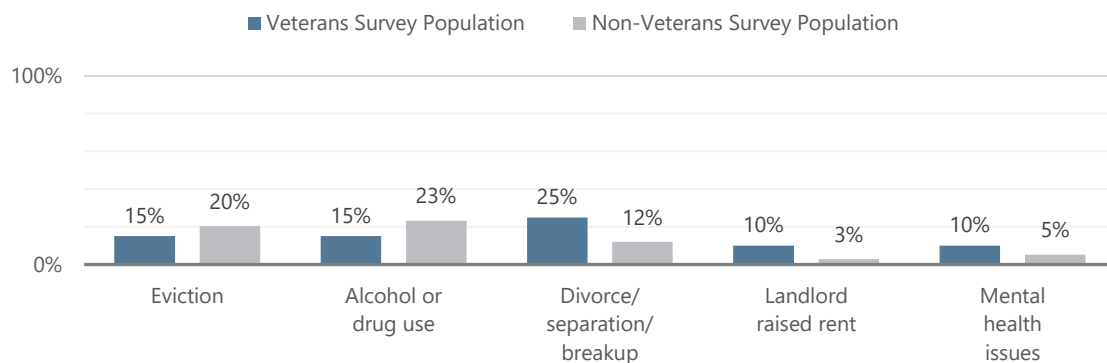
Veteran n = 19

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2017). San José Homeless Count.

### PRIMARY CAUSE OF HOMELESSNESS AMONG THOSE HOMELESS VETERANS

The most common cause of homelessness among veteran survey respondents was divorce, separation, or breakup (25%), higher than non-veteran respondents (12%). Veteran survey respondents were less likely than non-veteran respondents to cite eviction, alcohol or drug use. On the other hand, veteran survey respondents were more likely to indicate landlords raising rent and mental health issues as a primary cause of their homelessness.

FIGURE 33. PRIMARY CAUSE OF HOMELESSNESS, VETERAN AND NON-VETERAN COMPARISON



Veteran Survey Population n=20 offering 21 responses; Non-Veteran Survey Population n=309 respondents offering 442 responses

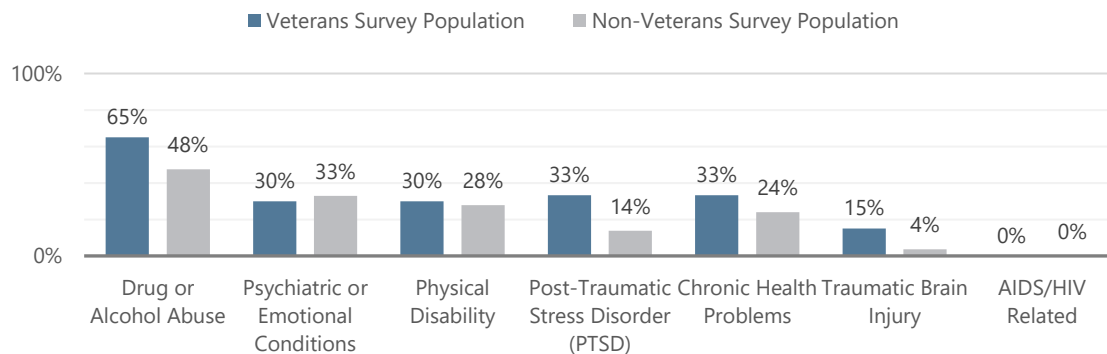
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2017). San José Homeless Census.

Note: Multiple response question. Percentages may not add up to 100.

### DISABLING CONDITIONS AMONG HOMELESS VETERANS

A lower percentage of veteran respondents reported having one or more disabling conditions, 57% compared to 71% of non-veterans. Disabling conditions among veteran survey respondents has decreased from 63% in 2015.

FIGURE 34. HEALTH CONDITIONS, VETERAN AND NON-VETERAN COMPARISON, 2017



Veterans Survey Population n=19-21; Non-Veteran Survey Population n= 290-304

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2017). San José Homeless Census.

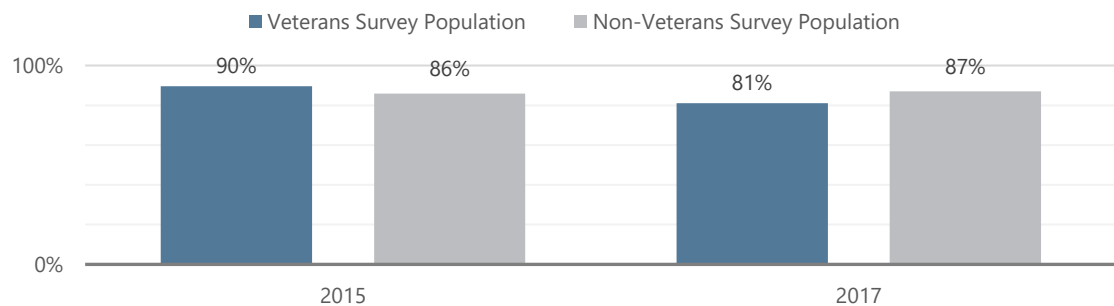
Note: Multiple response question. Percentages may not add up to 100.

### ACCESS TO SERVICES AMONG VETERANS

Overall, the number of veterans connected to any form of services was lower than the non-veteran population, 81% compared to 87%. In terms of governmental assistance, 80% of veterans reported they were receiving government assistance, compared to 76% of non-veteran respondents.

When asked about the specific services they are receiving, the most frequent responses were free meal services (71%), bus passes (24%), and job training (10%).

FIGURE 35. ACCESS TO SERVICES, VETERAN AND NON-VETERAN COMPARISON



2015 Veterans Survey Population n=67 responses offering 158 responses; Non-Veteran Survey n=505 responses offering 1,097 responses; 2017 Veterans Survey Population n=21 responses offering 33 responses; Non-Veteran Survey Population n= 302 respondents offering 615 responses

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015-2017). San José Homeless Census.

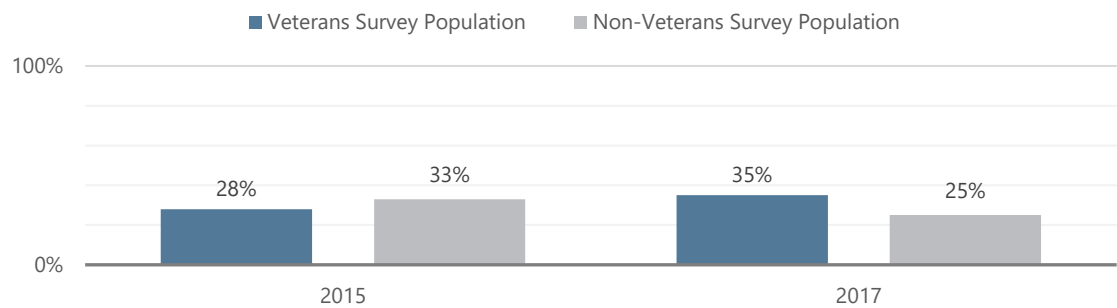


## INCARCERATION AMONG HOMELESS VETERANS

Among those who are incarcerated, veterans are more likely than non-veterans to be first time offenders, to have committed a violent offense, and to have longer prison sentences. Veterans who are incarcerated may also face the loss of various VA benefits during this time.<sup>11</sup>

Thirty-five percent (35%) of the veteran survey population reported they had spent one night in jail in the 12 months prior to the survey. A higher percentage of veterans (35%) reported having spent a night in jail in the last 12 months when compared to non-veterans (25%).

FIGURE 36. A NIGHT SPENT IN JAIL OR PRISON IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS, VETERAN AND NON-VETERAN COMPARISON



2015 Veterans Survey Population n=68; Non-Veteran Survey Population n=520; 2017 Veterans Survey Population n=20; Non-Veteran Survey Population n=306

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015-2017). San José Homeless Census.

<sup>11</sup> Military Benefits. (2014). Incarcerated Veterans. Retrieved 2014 from <http://www.military.com/benefits/veteran-benefits/incarcerated-veterans.html>.

## HOMELESS FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

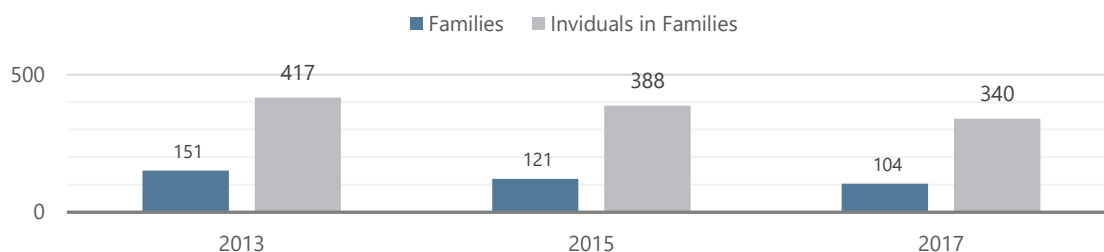
National data from 2016 suggest that 35% of all people experiencing homelessness are persons in families. Very few families experiencing homelessness are unsheltered, as public shelters serve 90% of homeless families in the United States; this is a significantly higher proportion of the population compared to other subpopulations, including unaccompanied children and transition-age youth. Data on families experiencing homelessness suggest that they are not much different from families in poverty.

The risk of homelessness is highest among households headed by single women and families with children under the age of six.<sup>12</sup> Children in families experiencing homelessness have increased incidence of illness and are more likely to have emotional and behavioral problems than children with consistent living accommodations.<sup>13</sup>

### HOMELESS FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

There were a total of 104 families experiencing homelessness in 2017, representing 340 individuals living in those families. This represents a decrease in the number of individuals in families of 12% from 2015

FIGURE 37. TOTAL NUMBER OF HOMELESS FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN ENUMERATED DURING THE POINT-IN-TIME HOMELESS CENSUS WITH TREND



Source: Applied Survey Research. (2013-2017). San José Homeless Census.

### DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS AMONG HOMELESS FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

A very small number of individuals in homeless families with children participated in the City of San José Survey. There were a total of 9 respondents belonging to this demographic.<sup>14</sup> Seven of nine survey respondents (78%) in families were female, higher than survey respondents not in families (32%). Five out of nine of those surveyed (56%) in families identified as Hispanic or Latino, higher than those not in families (43%).

### PRIMARY CAUSE OF HOMELESSNESS AMONG HOMELESS FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

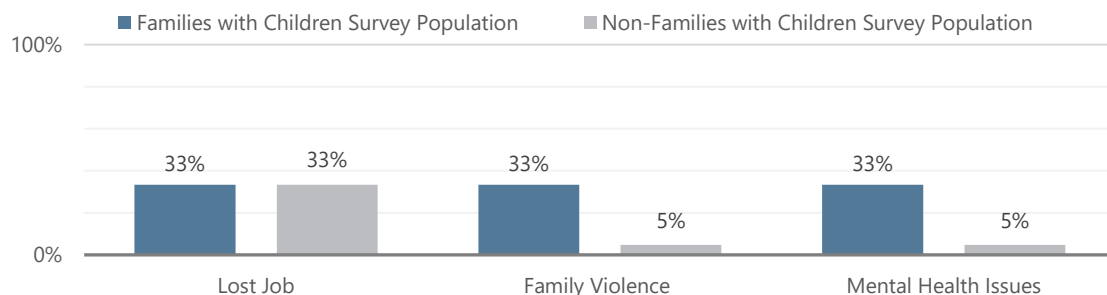
Similar to the overall homeless population, job loss is a key factor in experiencing homelessness. However, family violence and mental health issues were more prevalent among the nine survey respondents when compared to non-family homeless individuals.

<sup>12</sup> U. S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2007). Characteristics and Dynamics of Homeless Families with Children. Retrieved 2015 from <http://aspe.hhs.gov/>

<sup>13</sup> U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness. (2015). Opening Doors. Retrieved 2015 from <http://www.usich.gov/>

<sup>14</sup> Caution should be used when interpreting these data due to small number of surveys conducted with homeless individuals in families with children

**FIGURE 38. PRIMARY CAUSE OF HOMELESSNESS, FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN AND NON-FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN COMPARISON (TOP 3 RESPONSES)**

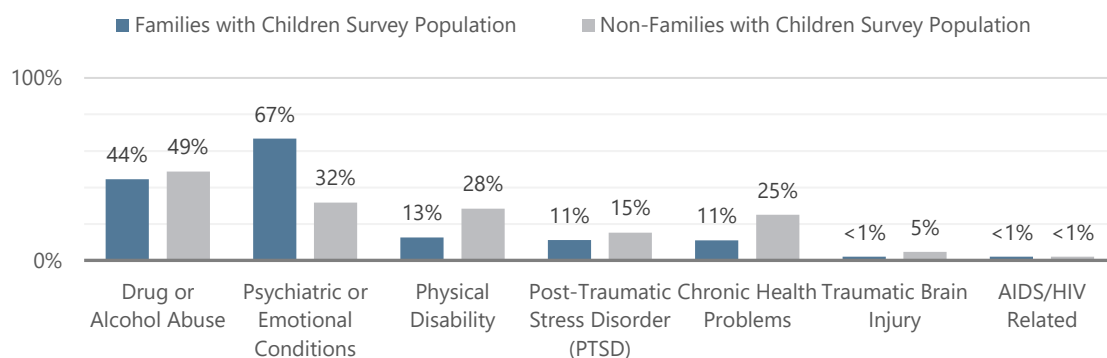


*Families with Children Survey Population n=9 respondents offering 24 responses; Non-Family with Children Survey Population n=320 respondents offering 439*  
*Source: Applied Survey Research. (2017). San José Homeless Census.*  
*Note: Multiple response question. Percentages may not add up to 100.*

## HEALTH CONDITIONS AMONG HOMELESS FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

Among the nine homeless families with children, psychiatric or emotional conditions were cited at a greater percentage than the non-family homeless survey population.

**FIGURE 39. HEALTH CONDITIONS, FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN AND NON-FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN COMPARISON**



*Families with Children Survey Population n=8-9; Non-Family with Children Survey Population n=300-316*  
*Source: Applied Survey Research. (2017). San José Homeless Census.*

## UNACCOMPANIED HOMELESS CHILDREN AND TRANSITION-AGE YOUTH

Due to the often hidden nature of youth homelessness, there are limited data available on unaccompanied children and transition-age youth experiencing homelessness. Although largely considered an undercount, current federal estimates suggest there are 35,686 unaccompanied children and transition-age youth on the streets and in public shelters across

the country.<sup>15</sup> Young people experiencing homelessness have a harder time accessing services, including shelter, medical care, and employment due to the stigma of their housing situation, lack of knowledge of available resources, and a dearth of services targeted to young people.<sup>16</sup>

In 2012, the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness amended the federal strategic plan to end homelessness to include specific strategies and supports to address the needs of unaccompanied homeless children and transition-age youth. As part of this effort, the Department of Housing and Urban Development placed increased focus on gathering data on unaccompanied homeless children and youth during the Point-in-Time Count.

The City of San José implemented a dedicated youth count and survey in 2013 to improve data on unaccompanied children and youth in the City of San José. These efforts were replicated in 2015. In 2017, the dedicated youth count was expanded. This expansion led to 3 teams of youth and service providers covering the City of San José, allowing for enumeration of areas to a much greater extent than in past years. The following section provides an overview of the findings on unaccompanied children and youth identified in City of San José's general point-in-time count, as well as in the specific youth count.

#### UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN AND TRANSITION-AGE YOUTH

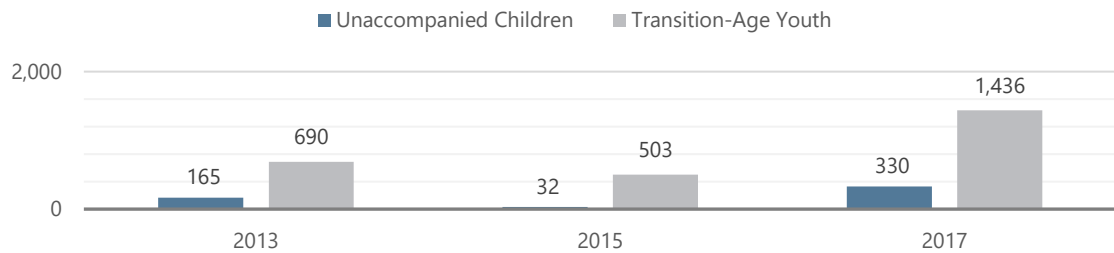
There were 330 unaccompanied children and 1,436 transition-age youth experiencing homelessness in the City of San José. Both numbers represent large increases from 2015, but caution must be used when interpreting this result. Due to increased knowledge of the population and more youth participation than in past years, 2017's youth count was the most extensive conducted in the City of San José. It will act as a valuable comparison in future years.

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<sup>15</sup> Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2016). Annual Assessment Report to Congress. Retrieved 2017 from <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/2016-AHAR-Part-1.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> National Coalition for the Homeless. (2011). Homeless Youth Fact Sheet. Retrieved 2011 from <http://www.nationalhomeless.org>.

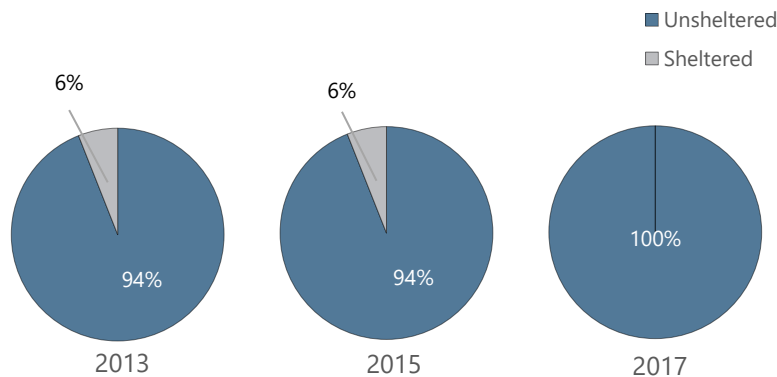
**FIGURE 40. TOTAL NUMBER OF UNACCOMPANIED HOMELESS CHILDREN AND TRANSITION-AGE YOUTH ENUMERATED DURING THE POINT-IN-TIME HOMELESS CENSUS WITH TREND**



Source: Applied Survey Research. (2013-2017). San José Homeless Census.

Tracking the shelter status of unaccompanied children and transition-age-youth helps to monitor where these vulnerable populations are spending their time. All unaccompanied children were living unsheltered, while ninety-five percent (95%) of transition-age-youth were living unsheltered. Evidence suggests that unaccompanied children stay away from shelters, fearing that they will be reported to law enforcement and/or their families.

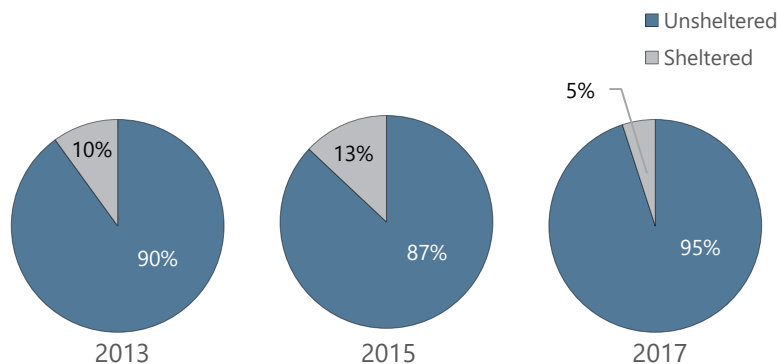
**FIGURE 41. SHELTER STATUS OF UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN DURING THE POINT-IN-TIME HOMELESS CENSUS**



2013 n=165; 2015 n=32; 2017 n=330

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2013-2017). San José Homeless Census.

**FIGURE 42. SHELTER STATUS OF TRANSITION-AGE-YOUTH DURING THE POINT-IN-TIME CENSUS**



2103 n=690; 2015 n=503; 2017 n=1,436

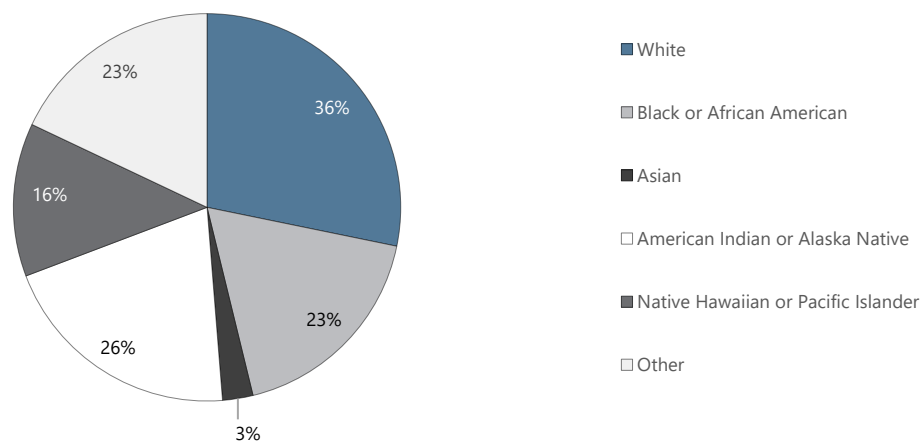
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2013-2017). *San José Homeless Census*.

### DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS AMONG UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN AND TRANSITION-AGE YOUTH

Nearly two-thirds (65%) of the 2017 population of youth respondents under the age of 25 identified as male, similar to the general population (66%). Nine percent (9%) of youth respondents identified as transgender, while 6% percent indicated that they do not identify as male, female, or transgender.

Forty-seven percent (47%) of 2017 youth respondents reported they were Hispanic or Latino, similar to the 43% of respondents 25 years and over. The highest reported race for 2017 youth respondents was white (36%), followed by 26% of respondents who identified as American Indian or Alaskan Native.

FIGURE 43. RACE AMONG UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN AND TRANSITION-AGE YOUTH



Children and Transition-Age Youth n = 31

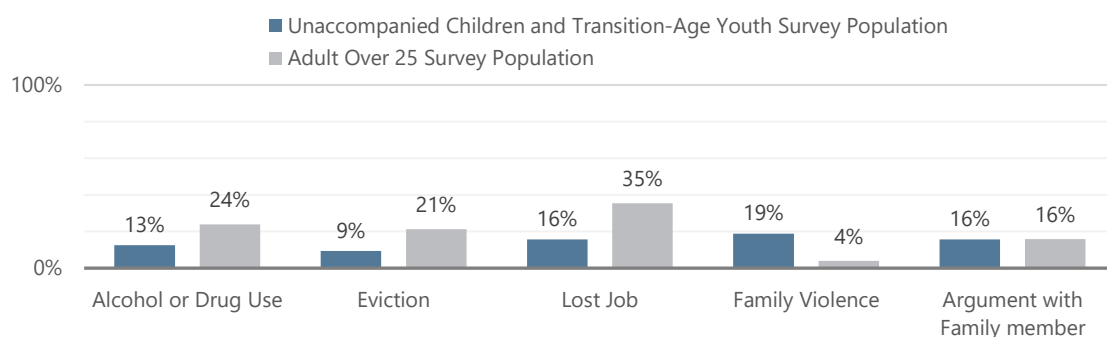
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2017). *San José Homeless Count*.

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

## PRIMARY CAUSE OF HOMELESSNESS AMONG UNACCOMPANIED HOMELESS CHILDREN AND TRANSITION-AGE YOUTH

Homeless youth survey respondents reported some differences in cause of homelessness compared to respondents 25 years or older. Unaccompanied homeless children and transition-age youth were much more likely to cite family violence as a cause of their homelessness, while much less likely to indicate alcohol or drug use, eviction, or job loss was a primary cause of their homelessness.

FIGURE 44. PRIMARY CAUSE OF HOMELESSNESS, UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN AND TRANSITION-AGE YOUTH AND ADULT OVER 25 COMPARISON



Unaccompanied Children and Transition-Age Youth Survey Population n=32 respondents offering 38 responses;

Adult Over 25 Survey Population n=297 respondents offering 425 responses

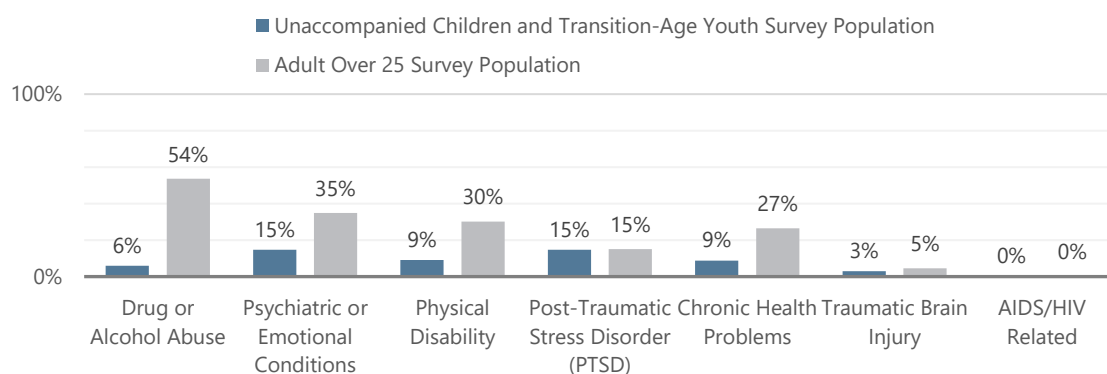
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2017). San José Homeless Census.

Note: Multiple response question. Percentages may not add up to 100.

## HEALTH CONDITIONS AMONG UNACCOMPANIED HOMELESS CHILDREN AND TRANSITION-AGE YOUTH

Though better than the general homeless population, health is still an issue for homeless youth. Homeless youth were more likely to indicate they experience psychiatric or emotional conditions, but they were far less likely to report experiencing physical disability and chronic health problems.

FIGURE 45. HEALTH CONDITIONS, UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN AND TRANSITION-AGE YOUTH AND ADULT OVER 25 COMPARISON



Unaccompanied Children and Transition-Age Youth Survey Population n=33-34; Adult Over 25 Survey Population n=276-291

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2017). San José Homeless Census.

Note: Multiple response question. Percentages may not add up to 100.

## INSTITUTIONAL INVOLVEMENT AMONG UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN AND TRANSITION-AGE YOUTH

Nearly half (44%) of youth respondents reported they had been in the foster care system, much higher than the 8% of adult respondents who had experienced foster care. Three percent (3%) of all youth respondents indicated that aging out of foster care as the primary cause of their homelessness. Twenty-eight percent (28%) of youth respondents indicated they spent a night in jail in the past year, similar to 25% of adult responses. More youth (19%) were currently on probation or parole when compared to adult responses (16%)

FIGURE 46. HISTORY OF FOSTER CARE, UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN AND TRANSITION-AGE YOUTH



*Unaccompanied Children and Transition-Age Youth Survey Population n=34*

*Source: Applied Survey Research. (2017). San José Homeless Census.*





# Conclusion

Between 2015 and 2017 the City of San José and its provider partners have made significant investments and reforms to meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness, moving people off of the streets and into housing and providing more access to services. Based on data gathered in 2017, it appears that those efforts have been successful in reducing the number of individuals experiencing homelessness in San José for the general population, but homeless youth experiencing are growing at a rapid rate. Survey results of that population indicate there is still progress to be made.

The survey component continues to provide a valuable insight into the experiences of individuals experiencing homelessness throughout the city of San José. For example, in San José, a disproportionate number of Black or African Americans experience homelessness. For many, the experience of homelessness is part of a long and recurring history of housing instability, exemplified by the fact that 57% of survey respondents indicated that they had previously experienced homelessness, an increase from 32% in 2015. Knowing where individuals were living before they most recently lost their housing informs discussions regarding how local the homeless population is to the region. This information can also influence changes to available support systems if the county and city finds increasing numbers of individuals living locally before experiencing homelessness, data that can be especially relevant when noting that 43% of survey respondents in San José reported staying in a shelter as their usual sleeping place, an increase from 27% in 2015. Among survey respondents, a third (33%) reported currently living outdoors: either on the streets, in parks, or in encampment areas, representing a decrease from a high of 46% in 2013. Although pinpointing a single cause of homelessness can be difficult, employment issues and alcohol and drug use continue to be key contributing factors of homelessness in San José. Many individuals experiencing homelessness face significant barriers in obtaining permanent housing. Financial obstacles (cost of rent, no income, no money for moving costs, and lack of transportation) continue to be barriers limiting individuals from obtaining housing.

There have been a number of accomplishments and improvements from 2015. The data in the 2017 City of San José Homeless Census and Survey can help educate the public, service providers, and policy makers on how to best serve the homeless population and help ensure that homelessness is a rare, brief, and one-time event. Study after study shows that prevention, Housing First initiatives and supportive services are the first steps in ending homelessness, and the County of Santa Clara and the City of San José are working diligently to develop these systems of change. In the interim, there is a lot of work to be done to address the immediate needs of the 4,350 persons who are experiencing homelessness and in need of assistance.



# Appendix 1: Methodology

## OVERVIEW

The purpose of the 2017 City of San José Homeless Census and Survey is to produce a point-in-time estimate of people who experience homelessness in San José, a city that covers approximately 180 square miles. The results of the street count were combined with the results from the shelter and institution count to produce the total estimated number of persons experiencing homelessness in San José on any given night. The subsequent survey was used to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the experiences and demographics of those enumerated on the night of the count. A more detailed description of the methodology follows.

## COMPONENTS OF THE HOMELESS CENSUS METHOD

The Point-in-Time Census methodology had three primary components:

- The general street count between the hours of 5:30am to noon on January 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> – an enumeration of unsheltered homeless individuals, most of San José was counted on the 24<sup>th</sup>
- The youth street count between the hours of 3 pm and 8 pm on January 24<sup>th</sup> – a targeted enumeration of unsheltered youth under the age of 25
- The shelter count for the night of January 23<sup>rd</sup> – an enumeration of sheltered homeless individuals staying in emergency shelter or transitional housing programs

The unsheltered and sheltered homeless counts were coordinated to occur within the same time period in order to minimize potential duplicate counting of homeless persons.

## STREET COUNT METHODOLOGY

### DEFINITION

For the purposes of this study, the HUD definition of unsheltered homelessness for Point-in-Time Counts is used. This definition includes individuals and families with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground

### VOLUNTEERS AND WORKER RECRUITMENT

Many individuals who live and/or work in the City of San José turned out to support the effort to enumerate the local population experiencing homelessness. More than 215 community volunteers and City and County staff registered to participate in the 2017 general street count. The volunteer recruitment effort was led by the Planning Committee and was greatly aided by numerous shelters and day programs from throughout the county. Extensive

outreach efforts were conducted, targeting local non-profits that serve the homeless and local volunteer programs, as well as other individuals who may be interested in participating in the count.

The planning committee sent a press release informing the community about the count and making an appeal for volunteer participation approximately two weeks before the count. Volunteers registered to participate, and received additional details on the count via a dedicated email account monitored and staffed by Applied Survey Research (ASR) support staff.

To recruit guides, shelters and day programs from throughout the county were asked to identify individuals experiencing homelessness with considerable knowledge of where to find individuals experiencing homelessness on the street, how to find encampments, how to identify if vehicles were being used as sleeping locations, and how to identify situations where safety was a concern. Additionally, shelter and program staffs were asked to recommend guides who were reliable and interested in the process. All guides were paid for their time, earning \$15 per hour worked, including a mandatory one hour training that was held in the days before the count.

### STREET COUNT TEAMS

Teams are generally comprised of 2 individuals, one volunteer from the community and one guide, generally an individual who is currently experiencing homelessness. Each team is assigned 1-4 census tracts as their assignment, depending on the size of the tracts. They are responsible for covering all areas that are accessible by the public, including parks, streets, business fronts, and wherever the guide believes there may be individuals experiencing homelessness. Teams are encouraged to have their community volunteer drive their vehicle, while the guide acts as a navigator and enumerator during the process. All teams are given a brief refresher training before heading out into the field.

### SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

Safety is of the utmost importance during the count and every effort was made to minimize potentially hazardous situations. Information regarding potentially dangerous encampment areas or other locations was shared when appropriate. Techniques for avoiding potentially dangerous situations were shared. The observational nature of the count was emphasized and has been found to be highly successful in minimizing potentially dangerous situations in the past. Volunteers were given guidance on how to act when canvassing encampment areas as well as how to respect a population that was likely to be sleeping. Additionally, the knowledge and experience of guides are valuable for safety reasons and volunteers and teams are encouraged to listen to their guide when they give suggestions regarding safety.

### STREET COUNT DEPLOYMENT

To achieve complete coverage of the City within the timeframe, the planning team identified six locations to serve as deployment centers on the morning of the count. Deployment centers were spread around the county, to give teams convenient locations from which to meet and then head to their assigned locations. Each deployment center was assigned a number of enumeration routes, also based on location, to assure timely deployment of enumeration teams into the field. Volunteers and guides were assigned deployment centers based on preference and the need to make sure that each center had the appropriate number of teams.

### TARGETED STREET OUTREACH - YOUTH

It was determined that homeless youth would be more prominent on the street during daylight hours, rather than in the evening when the general count was conducted. The youth count was conducted from approximately 3 p.m. to 8 p.m. on January 24, 2017. Youth worked in teams of two to four, with teams coordinated by youth street outreach workers.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development and the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness recognize that youth do not commonly co-mingle with homeless adults and are not easily identified by non-youth.

### TARGETED STREET OUTREACH – ENCAMPMENTS

The City of San José has explored numerous service and outreach initiatives related to the growth of encampments in urban locations near waterways, public works, and other general urban open space areas. The City of San José, in particular, funds a homeless outreach and engagement program with outreach worker staff dedicated to linking encamped homeless to services and housing. These teams frequent encampments and build relationships that encourage participation in local homeless service initiatives, whether it is housing or other supportive services.

Larger encampment areas in the City of San José were identified during a focus group with outreach staff prior to the census count and special teams of outreach workers, familiar with these areas, were organized to count those residing in these larger encampments on the dates of the count. Targeted encampment areas were identified on general street count maps, and homeless persons residing in those encampments were counted by the outreach workers rather than the census street teams. The result was a comprehensive profile of homeless encampments in San José.

### TARGETED STREET OUTREACH - VEHICLES

Identifying individuals residing in vehicles is difficult during the morning hours of the census count. By the time the sun rises, those residing in vehicles have often moved on to more remote locations or have found places where they blend in. North Santa Clara County (within city of San José) recognized the need for targeted outreach and provided a dedicated outreach worker to enumerate vehicles prior to sunrise.

### CENSUS UNDERCOUNT

For a variety of reasons, individuals experiencing homelessness generally do not want to be located, and make concerted efforts to avoid detection. Regardless of how successful outreach efforts are, an undercount of those experiencing homelessness will persist, especially of hard-to-reach subpopulations such as unsheltered families, undocumented individuals, and unaccompanied children and youth.

The methods employed in a non-intrusive visual homeless enumeration, while academically sound, have inherent biases and shortcomings. Even with the assistance of dedicated homeless service providers and individuals with lived experience, the methodology cannot guarantee 100% accuracy. Many factors may contribute to missed opportunities, including:

- It is difficult to identify persons who may be sleeping in vans, cars, recreational vehicles, abandoned buildings, or structures unfit for human habitation.
- Individuals residing in isolated rural areas that are difficult to access or otherwise identify for the purposes of the count.
- Individuals whose physical appearance differs from traditional visual cues associated with people experiencing homelessness can be mistaken for housed individuals. This

is especially true of unaccompanied children and youth, who often “hide in plain sight” and present similarly to their housed peers.

- Families experiencing homelessness with children often seek opportunities to stay on private property, rather than sleep on the streets, in vehicles, or makeshift shelters.

By counting the minimum number of individuals experiencing homelessness during a given point-in-time, the count methodology is conservative and therefore most likely results in an undercount of certain unsheltered individuals. A margin of error on the final count is not available, though the data presented is to be considered a minimum estimate. However, this conservative approach is necessary to preserve the integrity of the data collected. Even though the census is most likely an undercount of the population experiencing homelessness, the methodology employed is the most comprehensive approach available and provides invaluable data for local and federal service agencies.

## SHELTER COUNT METHODOLOGY

### GOAL

The goal of the shelter count was to gain an accurate count of the number of homeless persons who were being temporarily housed in shelters across Santa Clara County.

### DATA COLLECTION

To collect data on individuals staying in shelters on the night of January 23rd, ASR worked with BitFocus, the HMIS data administrators for the County of Santa Clara including San José. BitFocus collected data on all emergency shelters, transitional housing programs, and safe havens operating in the county. Data was collected on household status, age, gender, race and ethnicity, veteran status, chronic status, and if individuals had certain health conditions. There were a small, limited number of shelters that do not participate in the HMIS system. To gather their data, ASR collected the same data using a web-based system of reporting. Data was then broken out specifically for shelters that operate in the City of San José.

### CHALLENGES

There were a few challenges in collecting surveys and survey data throughout the City of San José. First and foremost was the weather and its impact. The series of storms that impacted Santa Clara County and the Bay Area caused a variety of difficulties related to data collection. Surveyors repeatedly mentioned difficulties finding enough respondents because so many were not in their normal sleeping locations because of weather related movement. Staff members at participating shelters and programs frequently mentioned the added difficulties that the inclement weather had, specifically dealing with the large influx of families experiencing homelessness after flooding drove dozens of families to seek shelter, necessitating the creation of a temporary shelter for families that had to be staffed by shelter staff, adding another obstacle in survey collection.

### EFFORTS TO INCLUDE SCHOOL DISTRICT DATA

Significant efforts were made to include data from all school districts within Santa Clara County. ASR and partners from the county met with district representatives to prepare them for the count and train them in data collection procedures. District representatives were trained to call all families that met the HUD definition of homelessness and ask where they had been staying on the night of the count. That information was then included in the appropriate census tract. 12 of 27 school districts were included, an increase from past years. Other districts were not able to participate due to a heavy workload.

## SURVEY METHODOLOGY

### PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

The survey of 331 homeless persons was conducted in order to yield qualitative data about the homeless community in the city of San José. These data are used for the McKinney-Vento Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance funding application and are important for future program development and planning. The survey elicited information such as gender, family status, military service, length and recurrence of homelessness, usual nighttime accommodations, causes of homelessness, and access to services through open-ended, closed-ended, and multiple response questions. The survey data bring greater perspective to current issues of homelessness and to the provision and delivery of services.

Surveys were conducted by homeless workers and shelter staff, who were trained by Applied Survey Research. Training sessions led potential interviewers through a comprehensive orientation that included project background information and detailed instruction on respondent eligibility, interviewing protocol, and confidentiality. Homeless workers were compensated at a rate of \$7 per completed survey.

It was determined that survey data would be more easily collected if an incentive gift was offered to respondents in appreciation for their time and participation. Socks were given as an incentive for participating in the 2017 Homeless Survey. The socks were easy to obtain and distribute, were thought to have wide appeal, and could be provided within the project budget. This approach enabled surveys to be conducted at any time during the day. The gift proved to be a great incentive and was widely accepted among survey respondents.

### SURVEY SAMPLING

Based on a Point-in-Time estimate of 4,350 homeless persons, with a randomized survey sampling process, the 331 valid surveys represent a confidence interval of  $\pm 5\%$  with a 95% confidence level when generalizing the results of the survey to the estimated population of homeless individuals in Santa Clara.

The 2017 survey continued the practice of 2007-2011 surveys which were administered in both transitional housing facilities and on the street. In order to assure the representation of transitional housing residents, who can be underrepresented in a street-based survey, survey quotas were created to reach individuals and heads of family households living in these programs. Individuals residing in emergency shelters were reached through street surveys during the day when emergency shelters were closed.

Strategic attempts were made to reach individuals in various geographic locations and of various subset groups such as homeless youth, minority ethnic groups, military veterans, domestic violence victims, and families. One way to increase the participation of these groups was to recruit peer survey workers. Like past surveys, the 2017 survey also prioritized a peer-to-peer approach to data collection by increasing the number of currently homeless surveyors.

In order to increase randomization of sample respondents, survey workers were trained to employ an “every third encounter” survey approach. Survey workers were instructed to approach every third person they encountered whom they considered to be an eligible survey respondent. If the person declined to take the survey, the survey worker could approach the next eligible person they encountered. After completing a survey, the randomized approach was resumed. It is important to recognize that while efforts are made to randomize the respondents, it is not a random sample methodology.

## DATA COLLECTION

Care was taken by interviewers to ensure that respondents felt comfortable regardless of the street or shelter location where the survey occurred. During the interviews, respondents were encouraged to be candid in their responses and were informed that these responses would be framed as general findings, would be kept confidential, and would not be traceable to any one individual.

## DATA ANALYSIS

To avoid potential duplication of respondents, the survey requested respondents' initials and date of birth, so that duplication could be avoided without compromising the respondents' anonymity. Upon completion of the survey effort, an extensive verification process was conducted to eliminate duplicates. This process examined respondents' date of birth, initials, gender, ethnicity, and length of homelessness, and consistencies in patterns of responses to other questions on the survey.

## SURVEY ADMINISTRATION DETAILS

- The 2017 City of San José Homeless Survey was administered by the trained survey team between February 1 and March 19, 2017.
- In all, the survey team collected 331 unique surveys

## SURVEY CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

The 2017 Santa Clara Homeless Survey did not include an equal representation of all homeless experiences. There may be some variance in the data that the homeless individuals self-reported. However, using a peer interviewing methodology is believed to allow the respondents to be more candid with their answers and may help reduce the uneasiness of revealing personal information. Further, service providers and City and County staff members recommended individuals who would be the best to conduct interviews and they received comprehensive training about how to conduct interviews. The service providers and City staff also reviewed the surveys to ensure quality responses. Surveys that were considered incomplete or containing false responses were not accepted.



## Appendix 2: Definitions & Abbreviations

**Chronic homelessness** is defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs as “an unaccompanied homeless individual or family member with a disabling condition who has either been continuously homeless for a year or more, or has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years (for a cumulative total of 12 months or more).”

**Disabling condition** for the purposes of this study, is defined as a physical disability, mental illness, depression, alcohol or drug abuse, chronic health problems, HIV/AIDS, Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), or a developmental disability. A health condition has an impact on housing stability or employment.

**Emergency shelter** is the provision of a safe alternative to the streets in a shelter facility. Emergency shelter is short-term, usually for 180 days or fewer. Domestic violence shelters are typically considered a type of emergency shelter, as they provide safe, immediate housing for victims and their children.

**Family** is defined as a household with at least one adult and one child under 18.

**Homeless** under the category 1 definition of homelessness in the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act, includes individuals and families living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements, or with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground.

**HUD** is the abbreviation for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

**Sheltered** homeless individuals are those homeless individuals who are living in emergency shelters or transitional housing programs.

**Single** individual refers to an unaccompanied adult or youth, age 18 and over.

**Transition-Age Youth (TAY)** refers to an unaccompanied youth aged 18-24 years.

**Transitional housing** facilitates the movement of homeless individuals and families to permanent housing. It is housing in which homeless individuals may live up to 24 months and receive supportive services that enable them to live more independently. Supportive services – which help promote residential stability, increased skill level or income, and greater self-determination – may be provided by the organization managing the housing, or coordinated by that organization and provided by other public or private agencies.



Transitional housing can be provided in one structure or several structures at one site, or in multiple structures at scattered sites.

**Unaccompanied** refers to children under the age of 18 who do not have a parent or guardian present.

**Unsheltered** homeless individuals are those homeless individuals who are living on the streets, in abandoned buildings, storage structures, vehicles, encampments, or any other place unfit for human habitation.



# CITY OF SAN JOSÉ

# 2017

**HOMELESS CENSUS & SURVEY**  
COMPREHENSIVE REPORT

